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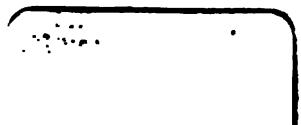
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OUR SCOTTISH CLERGY.



THE HISTORY OF THE
CIVILISATION OF THE
INDO-IRANIAN PEOPLES

BY JAMES MUIR
LATE PROFESSOR OF HINDOOSTANIAN
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

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OUR SCOTTISH CLERGY:

FIFTY-TWO SKETCHES,

BIOGRAPHICAL, THEOLOGICAL, & CRITICAL,



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BY JOHN SMITH, A.M.,
AUTHOR OF "SACRED BIOGRAPHY," &c. &c.

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P R E F A T O R Y N O T E.

To be in a becoming spirit on the Lord's Day is a much more rare and difficult exercise than is generally supposed. Priestcraft assumes that the proper exercise of a Christian is to yield himself up unquestioningly to his spiritual guide, and receive as the truth of God whatever it may choose to advance. To dare to think or criticise is to commit something approaching the unpardonable. He is the best Christian who obeys his teacher most implicitly—who throws up his mind, conscience, affections, to what he may command. But even those who have shaken themselves free of such a yoke, and dare to think and act for themselves, are in danger of mistake. An occasional visitation of seriousness—a few words of prayer—a few hours' attendance on public worship, and a cursory or attentive perusal of devotional books—are not necessarily connected with a proper spirit, but may be the mere result of education or custom. A mind in a right state meets with God in the closet, in the sanctuary, and by the way. To such a mind external nature is not merely a vast system of type and symbol adumbrating the invisible and eternal, but her varied manifestations teach lessons of the highest importance. The man in such a state sees in the vast outspread a struggle after union and harmony. By day the sun fills space with his beams; which is simply inanimate nature's mode of expressing reciprocity and sympathy. By night the star, remote in space, as if afraid of isolation, shoots out its small rays like tendons to fasten on

surrounding worlds. The little blade of grass stretches itself upwards to get as near the sun as possible. The flower opens its buds to receive his genial beams. The varied productions shoot upwards to embrace that influence from which all their life and vigour and beauty are derived. The animal kingdom joins in this holy sympathy of nature. The bird adds its sweet voice to the music of the rippling rivulet or sighing breeze. The entire chorus of the grove mingles with the minstrelsy of the storm. The very blending of sounds seems to establish a relationship, and to cherish a feeling of union and affection and sympathy throughout the various departments of the universe. The grass fields laying aside their dreary robes, and dressing themselves in living green, say to the devout mind, "There shall be a resurrection." The trees, shooting forth their buds, silently tell man that his body, too, shall have a revival. The seed flower, as it breaks the clod and bursts upwards, speaks of the day of opening graves, when the dead shall live. The ten thousand cheerful voices with which earth is vocal, say, "Awake and sing ye who dwell in the dust, for your dew shall be as the dew of herbs." The entire face of nature seems to adumbrate the change which shall take place when the prisoners of the tomb shall lay aside their prison robes, and stand forth in all the beauty of holiness, from the womb of the morning with the dew of youth.

While nature speaks thus of "nature's God" to the sanctified mind there are also external arrangements connected with public worship which are not without their significance. The works of man have a voice and a meaning of great significance. In the case of an old church, the mind, aided by the glimmering taper of history, travels backwards and shapes out images and scenes, shadowy they may be, but fascinating, because they are partly its own creations, and solemn, because they are associated with the dead. The symptoms of decay—the cracks and crumblings around—are so many orators speaking of a land where our fathers dwelt, from which we are ever hastening. They speak of groups, composed of the young and the old, who assembled to hear the messenger of God speak of the unknown land. We not only fancy the father and the son, the mother and the daughter, the brother and the sister

seated in these pews with eyes directed to the minister, either doubting or believing what he says, but we see one depart and others remaining to weep their loss, who in their turn depart, also leaving mourners behind to wait their change, and disappear when it comes. We follow these travellers of eternity to the brink of Jordan, and, looking across its dark waters, have some vision of them on the farther shore. A new church, again, is suggestive of the future—not so much of the dead as of the living. The past stretches behind us like a perpetual evening with its calm, still air and shadowed earth; the future is an everlasting morning bright and cheerful, with the dew upon the grass, and the harbingers of the coming day trembling up the sky. The new erection impels the thoughts forward on this shining way to contemplate yet many unborn generations wending thither; and if we have faith in human progress, each succeeding generation will appear purer and wiser than the preceding one. The past is fixed, completed, and hopeless; the future is limitless, indeterminate, and bright with the rays of hope, and consequently a new church is peculiarly expressive of increased and still increasing views, of purifying agencies, of the progress of enlightenment, the spread of Christianity, and the approach of that period when the leopard and the lamb shall dwell together, and there shall be nothing to hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.

The intelligent worshipper can look farther than to the material and palpable. He discovers the depths of divine goodness and wisdom in the apportioning of gifts to men appointed to attend on the services of the sanctuary. In them a proof is found of a great principle, which will be found to obtain throughout all the departments of the universe—we mean the economy of the Divine administration. Amid variety, profusion, exuberance, nothing is lost. Not a ray of light, not a drop of dew, not a blade of grass, not a particle of matter, but answers a useful purpose in the material universe. The same law may be observed throughout the spiritual world. If any one gift is wasted a violation is done to this law, and when a soul is lost the universe feels to its core. In connection with the economy of the Divine administration its equity is inscribed in characters which the observant can read and

understand. The parts of the earth that appear most neglected and useless on the surface, are enriched with the most precious metals. The same law obtains throughout the animal world. Strength, beauty, symmetry, swiftness, are not all conferred on one. The birds of paradise dazzle with the gorgeousness of their plumage, but they awake no music in the groves. The lion is the king of the forest, but he is surpassed by many meaner animals in cunning and beauty. A creature gifted with all the attributes of the animal kingdom would appear a monster. His gifts would be almost as great a misfortune to himself as to others, for he would stand out alone—solitary—companionless—unapproachable. This same law of distributive justice reaches the human family. Besides the distinctive peculiarities of the sexes there is a diversity of gifts physical and mental. A fine physical frame, though greatly admired, is but one of the least of gifts to a rational and immortal being, and, as a general rule, such frames are poorly tenanted. The greatest personal loss, which the beautiful Absoloms can sustain, is their hair. The mightiest minds have generally been plainly accommodated. Dandyism and doltism are often allied, whereas genius, generally, shelters in an unimposing and unpretending exterior. So also diversity of gifts is scattered among the many. Paul, in addressing the Corinthians, enumerates a variety of the gifts (see 1 Cor. xii. 10th verse) bestowed on the members of the early church. His enumeration might have included (if, indeed, it did not) "to one the gift of speaking, and to another the gift of writing," and his own experience would have supplied him with an apt illustration. His letters were weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible—at least so said his adversaries. But while such is the general rule there are some splendid exceptions. A few there are who can charm the thousands with their eloquence, and, at the same time, command a wide homage and love by their writings.

Besides diversity of natural gifts, circumstances often greatly affect character and usefulness. A man of disordered physical system is essentially one of a diseased and jaundiced mind. Many an anathema by one section of the church against another is traceable much more palpably to gastronomy than

to *diablerie*. A sound and healthy body is essential to a candid study of any one branch of metaphysical science. One who never had an hour's peace with his physical system may study Euclid with success. He may even make something of astronomy, though he is in danger of representing the pretty stars as the abode of furies, and bespattering the very heavens with his bile. But morals and religion are regions in which the ill natiured and disordered cut a very sorry figure. We mean not to say that a man with a bad stomach is necessarily a man with a bad heart, or that it is very hard for such a man to enter into "the kingdom;" but we do say that he is in danger of strewing the path of life with thorns, and instead of going to Zion with songs of joy, sorrow and sighing are his employment, and he seldom enjoys the sun and the scenery of Bunyan's "land of Beulah." When Christian teachers are men of disordered stomachs woe to those whose spiritual concerns they superintend! We have in our eye a number of most excellent preachers and authors whose physical disorders have thrown on all their thoughts the gloom of the misanthrope. Even the brightest promises of the gospel assume a sombre hue in their hands, and when they touch on the awful they "harrow the very souls" of their hearers. We have often been in doubts whether a disordered fancy or a disordered stomach is the greater calamity in a Christian teacher. The man of wild and extravagant fancy is in some danger of substituting theories and speculations for the truth of the gospel; while the man of exceptionable organism is in some danger of presenting truth in a less attractive light than Bible light. Such often operate on truth as smoked glass on the rays of the sun. The rays are the same, but they appear to be different. There are other minds so gloomy that the loveliest view they can give of heaven is far from being attractive. Horrors are their most congenial study, and it is remarkable with what ingenuity all topics are reduced to the gloomy and forbidding. There are other minds and bodies so healthful, so sound, so happy, that whatever they touch appears lovely. It is not in them to cause pain to any creature, and, to avoid a momentary unpleasantness, they are in some danger of risking a permanent woe. While the other class, like Nero, would, if they could, make

the world wear sackcloth and spend its years in sighing, this class would keep the world pleasant and jocund. The one is mount Etna squirting out burning cinders—the other is mount Lebanon shaking its cedars and sheltering the neighbourhood. We shall not attempt to say which class has the more profound religion, but it is pretty evident that the latter class, when it avoids extremes, will commend religion most successfully to others.

Diversity of mental attributes necessarily prevents uniformity in minor matters, and it is one of the objects of these sketches to reduce differences to their real proportions, and to shew that the points of agreement are much more numerous and important than the other. Though much has been done since the commencement of these sketches to reconcile those who too long stood aloof, much remains to be done ere all are one. In Apocalyptic vision John saw the door of heaven open, but since his time it has been no small part of the work of ecclesiastics to shut that door. The fabled keeper of a certain door is Cerberus, a three-headed monster; but if we are to believe in the validity of the transactions of all ecclesiastical bodies, the gates of the happy world have very numerous and not very amiable keepers. No triple-headed monster is there, but men in gowns and bands—the representatives of all ecclesiastical denominations. Never had any one such a brood of successors as Peter. The keys committed to him seem to have been lost, and every section of the church, large and small, has got false keys to shut, at the pleasure of its representatives, the everlasting gates to exclude those who follow not with them. The Pope for many a dark day enjoyed a monopoly of the keys, and opened and shut heaven according to his pleasure or caprice; but now-a-days the latest “consecrated cobbler,” to use the severe and sarcastic language of the late Sydney Smith, in a leader’s meeting assumes all the power ever supposed to be lodged in infallible hands, and shuts the kingdom of heaven against some refractory brother who has departed from the faith. There is not an organised phase of Christianity but takes the liberty of using the keys occasionally. The forms of exclusion are different, but all are formed on the Pharisaical model, “Dost thou teach us? and they cast him out.” There is some sort of propriety

in entrusting an infallible man or an infallible church with the “keys of the kingdom;” but to give them to ignorant and erring creatures, who can scarcely read or write, is a violation of decency. The acknowledged housekeeper may, and ought to, have the use of the keys; but if they fall into the hands of every slattern the house will be spoiled, and, by and by, it will matter but little though the door be left open. The little child, when it was told that its grandfather (who had treated it rather austereley) would be in heaven, protested against being sent to the same place; and if all the keepers of the invisible world have the power they allege to admit their creatures, every sensible man on earth will apply the patriarchal words to such a future home, “My soul come not thou into their secret; mine honour unto their assembly be not thou united.” It is one of the objects of these sketches to expose the extreme folly of such proceedings, and to persuade all who hold the Head to display still more charity if not a little more uniformity. It is hoped that the sketches have already effected good by aiding in the junction of bodies long severed, and in the formation and working of the Evangelical Union, and their object will be accomplished when those one in heart shall be one in profession, one in holy sympathy, and one in the bonds of Christian fellowship.

As the manner in which the Sabbath is observed in any country necessarily affects the character of the pulpit, recent movements in common with that day cannot be uninteresting. Men are still allowed to experiment on the Sabbath-day. In some countries the Sabbath of the Lord, and of the land, was never known—and in others, which enjoyed their Sabbaths, it has been legislatively and practically abandoned. France has no religious Sabbath. The first day of the week is the day of fêtes and plays, of festivity and mirth, of gaiety and luxurious idleness; but France is unblessed, and begins to feel its woes. Men are instinctively crying out in private and in the senate-house for a Sabbath. Committees have been appointed to draw up reports recommendatory of the Sabbath, and the nation groans for a sacred resting day. In our own country the experiment of a Sabbath or no Sabbath, though legislatively settled, is still socially going on. A vast mass abjure

the day as a religious observance, and blaspheme the Sabbath in their filthy dens ; and a few, better circumstanced, join them in the cry. Yet it is a remarkable fact that society would abjure a known Sabbath despiser. In our land commerce, wealth, respectability, are on the side of the Sabbath ; and the profligate alone condemn it. Yet though the conscience of our country is right on this question, it is to be feared comparatively few derive the full benefit it is designed to confer. How few feel their hearts gladdened when it is said, " Go ye up to the house of God !" How few feel as they ought that it is the day God has made—the day the Saviour arose—the day which is sacred as the emblem of the Sabbath of the skies ! Yet all must own the fine pause it makes in the business and stir of life. Every voice is hushed that God may be heard speaking in his providence, and by his servants. What were our artisans, mechanics, and labourers, did they hear no sound but that of the hammer, and the ceaseless hum of a busy traffic, and the monotonous din of machinery ? God makes the Sabbath dawn on our land, and its approach is the signal of the cessation of labour ; and men are called to hear what God will say, and to be reminded that they have souls, and that God means something better for them than mechanical labour and material enjoyment. This is the day God has made for man as man—for man as a sinner—for man in his highest style of Christian. Let us be glad and rejoice in it.

The writers of the sketches have to thank a generous public for the increasing favour it has bestowed on this somewhat long series of sketches. They did not contemplate prolonging them over so many years, but found as they proceeded that to stop would have been to displease and disappoint the many. With the exception of a few persons of whom they did not speak so well as they thought they should, the sketches have been universally well received. It is hoped that this volume will be as acceptable as its predecessors, and productive of still greater good.

JULY 16, 1851.

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OUR SCOTTISH CLERGY.

REV. P. M'DOWAL, M.A.,

ALLOA.

IN man's present state he must be content to receive the elements of knowledge, secular and sacred, through the medium of his senses. In the earlier ages the pillars of fire and cloud emblemed forth the presence and the power of the God of Israel. Jehovah brought himself near to many by visions, and voices, and types, and symbols. Religion was localised by the tabernacle and temple. The devout Israelite felt his heart warm when it was said to him, Go ye up to the house of God. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them that bring good tidings! The hill Mizar, the mountains of Bether, Olivet, and the little hills about Jerusalem, were sacred to the pious Jew, and were not only the scene of his worship but symbols of the power, and goodness, and grace of the God of Israel. The dews of Hermon and the cedars of Lebanon were mingled with his holiest associations, and aided him to lift his soul to the throne in the heavens. Sacred places, and sacred persons, and sacred things had the highest sanction. They aided the exercise of a true devotion. The objective symbol became the counterpart of the subjective emotion. How many were the sacred spots frequented by our Lord and

his followers in Judea—spots which have still a speaking significance, and which, in all ages, have induced pilgrims to visit them, though obstacles seemingly insurmountable lay between! Who has not wished to visit Bethlehem where the mysterious babe lay in the manger, and where the angels of God worshipped that babe wrapped in swaddling bands? Who has not wished to visit Nazareth—proverbially notorious as was that place—because there he whose outgoings were from everlasting was brought up? Who refers not often to Bethany, to Gethsemane, to Calvary, and to those hills about Jerusalem “into which Jesus went up,” when “every man went to his own home”? Nor are angels, who excel in strength and wisdom, ignorant of the hallowed associations connected with those scenes. These holy beings who witnessed the sorrows of the Saviour, and ministered to him in his dreariest hours, have gained so much acquaintance with man as to know that with sacred places are associated holiest thoughts, and that the places where Christ tabernacled, and suffered, and triumphed, prove Bethels for the Christian when he draws nearest to Him who is a spirit. Angels said to the weeping women at the grave of Jesus, Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and he is the most successful preacher who can point out most graphically the circumstances and scenes which tell most profoundly and touchingly on the heart and mind of the follower of the Lamb. The subject of our sketch, in his discourse last Sabbath forenoon, showed that he possesses no little power and skill in directing the attention of the disciples of Christ to the place where the Lord lay. In preaching on these words of the angel, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” Matt. xxviii. 6, he spoke to the following effect:—He said that the persons addressed were evidently in a state of alarm, and the circumstances in which they were placed were well calculated to produce this alarm. First, They were visiting a grave, a grave lonely and but lately closed up. The mind is naturally filled with instinctive fear in the presence of the dead in such circumstances as those in gloomy Gethsemane. But besides being visiting a grave, these women were visiting a grave in the dark. “Early in the morning, while it was yet dark,” did these anxious women visit the grave of Jesus. Even

at noon a chill comes over the soul in the presence of the dead, but at night the startled imagination conjures phantoms which arouse and terrify. But, farther, these visitors at the grave were females—weak, timid, and unprotected. Even the boldest would tremble in such circumstances, and how much more those who are proverbial for alarm in such a case? These, farther, were at the grave of a friend, a dear friend, who had very recently been laid in the grave, and who had died in circumstances of extreme distress. They remembered the happy scenes in which they mingled when he was yet with them, and the past contrasted with their present lonely situation. But, farther, the grave was empty when they expected it to be full. They had brought with them spices to embalm the body, but on their arrival they found the stone rolled away and the grave empty. But lastly, as to these circumstances. A mighty angel sat by the grave—an angel whose appearance so terrified the Roman soldiers that they became as dead men. This angel sat by the side of the fresh grave, and what wonder was it that these unprotected females were terrified? The angel said to them, Fear not ye because the grave is empty. I am the servant of him whom ye seek. These soldiers may well be afraid, for they are in league with his enemies, but fear not ye, ye are his friends. Ye seek Jesus who was crucified. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. We shall, therefore, inquire what is to be seen where the Lord lay—not what was actually seen by these timid women but what you may see individually, as you look into that empty grave. First, In Christ's empty grave we may see the reality of his death. Second, In the place where the Lord lay we may see the certainty of his resurrection. Third, In the place where Christ lay, see the bitter fruits of sin. Fourth, In the place where the Lord lay, see the ardour of his love. Further, see in the place where he lay the perfection of his atoning sacrifice. Lastly, in the place where the Lord lay, see where consolation is to be found for his afflicted followers. See the place where the Redeemer lay, and be no more afraid to lie down where Christ lay. He will go down to that Egypt with you, and bring you up again. The earth shall cast up its dead, and the righteous will arise and sing—We have been

compelled to omit the illustrations of the above.—The discourse occupied fifty-five minutes.

The subject of our sketch enters the pulpit like one conscious of fitness for his work. When he stands up to commence the service there is a tranquillity in every feature. He stands erect, and in a soft, distinct, musical voice, reads the Psalm. The prayer was well arranged, and excellent in its matter—and his manner was solemn and becoming. The discourse was evidently the natural effusion of his mind. We call it so, in contradistinction from certain sermons that are patched up from sundry authors, and which bear little or no evidence of their sympathy with the speaker's mind. This sentence is Howe diluted—that Taylor maimed—that Chalmers destroyed—so that the speaker is more of a caterer than a thinker, and more of everybody than of himself. The sermons of such speakers may contain some excellent thoughts, and even brilliant passages, but they want symmetry, freshness, and identity. In opposition to these, the above discourse bears unmistakeably the image and superscription of the speaker. He reads not what he never wrote, for he reads not at all. He speaks not what he never thought, for the language is his own, and such as evidently springs up along with the thought. The introduction of the discourse proves him an excellent observer, both of external nature and of human conduct. The feelings of the women at the grave of the Saviour he analyses with great fidelity—the circumstances in which they are placed he delineates boldly and graphically. Fancy is vivid, but it interferes not with fact beyond being its illustrator. The unearthly feeling that creeps over those who stand by a fresh grave, the grave of a friend—a grave surrounded with “the terrors of the night”—a grave unexpectedly found to be empty, he finely illustrated; and with equal skill did he describe the consolations of the heavenly messenger who endeavoured to dispel their fears. In the chief illustrations of the discourse he used the text as a motto; but it is one of these texts which may be thus legitimately treated. Probably the preacher, before commencing his general illustrations, might have led us a little into the design of the angel, and described the literal grave. That design he partially showed in some of his general illus-

trations, but it might have been treated separately to complete the discourse—when, for instance, he showed there were no marks of haste, but the habiliments of death laid carefully aside in proof that the victor rose in the consciousness of his power, and that no Roman soldier, aided by the powers of darkness, could now detain him in the charnel house of the grave. The *sights*, however, which he exhibited were all naturally associated with the empty grave, and in general the discussion of the various parts were ably and logically handled. When the preacher gave out his text he stood erect with his hands crossed before him, and in the course of his delivery he frequently resumed that attitude. His gestures are natural and graceful. He is of the calm, unimpassioned school, as regards manner. His are not the thunders, and earthquake, and tempest, but the still small voice. Lightning there unquestionably is, but there is no unnecessary noise. Those who cannot do without stentorian lungs and violent gesture, and other clap-traps of a certain class of oratory, must be disappointed with this preacher. He never raises his voice to a high pitch, and never attempts the electric effects of the long and rising climax. His discourses throughout are well sustained, but have few or no passages studied for producing a momentary excitement, the only use of which is to give a few moments for coughing and other relieving symptoms. The hearer is never aroused by the start thetic, and therefore needs not the pause artificial. Attention is sustained without being overstretched, and the feelings are reached without being wrought into passion. His sermon is characterised by a steady excellence, never degenerating into dulness, and never culminating into the sublime. His mind is evidently formed for contemplation. He possesses imagination chastened and subdued. Nature he sees not only to possess innumerable beauties, but to be a great system of symbol acting on the mind and heart of the observer. His language is neat, chaste, and vigorous. His enunciation is distinct and pleasing, and his pronunciation careful and correct. He has evidently studied the communicative as well as the acquisitive. His oratory, as we have said, is not boisterous and tempestuous, but it is of a much higher class. Like all the more powerful elements

in material creation, oratory does its work best when it does it with the least noise. Yet let none suppose that our preacher is a cold theorist—a dry metaphysician, or a dull mathematical reasoner. He is calmest in description—description clothed in poetical and highly effective language. He makes no pretensions to depth or profundity, but studies plainness of speech and clearness of views. There is nothing in his manner or matter that could offend. Indeed there are few preachers which an educated congregation would prefer to him. His discourses are the dropping of honey from the rock, which the traveller wishes to drop on for ever. It is of the subject of our sketch as a preacher we have spoken. We are not sure that he has appeared as an author. Our high estimate of him in the pulpit leaves us at full liberty to treat his proceedings on the platform, or presbytery, or synod, according to their several deserts. We have not sufficient knowledge of his platform abilities to say anything of them. On some questions before church courts we have not hesitated to differ from him, though in general he is found to be an able pleader and wise counsellor in cases in which he is left to the unbiassed unfettered use of his judgment. “No man is wise all hours” was a heathen maxim, and even Christianity itself will not be able to eradicate all that is contrary to wisdom.

Mr M'Dowal is a native of Stranraer. He was educated in one of our Scottish universities, and wears its honours. He was ordained in 1826, and has laboured successfully in Alloa. He has an influential congregation, and has frequently aided in the discussion of general questions, as well as in congregational and denominational matters.

MAY 6, 1849.

REV. PETER CURRIE,

GLASGOW.

In this series of sketches the distinction between theology and religion, and between ecclesiastical and saving faith, has been frequently stated. Not only are theology and religion different, but frequently opposed and antagonistic. Certain theological views, instead of aiding religion, or forming any part of its principles or precepts, are alike opposed to religion, morality, and common sense. In this imperfect state there never will be a religious system perfectly pure. What God has enjoined is perfect; but from the position of man as a moral and responsible being he must be left to think and judge for himself, even as regards the meaning of the precepts of heaven. The objective truth is a dead letter till it comes into contact with the subjective mind. It contains general principles rather than details, and teaches in the form of history and narrative rather than in the form of systematic theology or divinity. A certain liberty being left to man in relation to the precepts of God, we naturally expect systematic theology bearing the stamp of earth as well as the stamp of heaven. The coin belongs to God, the image and superscription is Caesar's, or James', or Calvin's. Stereotyped theology may accomplish good, and also evil. It may enable feeble minds to reach a certain uniformity, but it also sometimes destroys their utility, and prevents their expansion. The sayings of some father, or confessor, or martyr, or author, carry with them almost the weight of the sayings of God. The confounding of human with divine authority often leads to the denial of both. On no subject has systematic theology operated more disastrously

than on the subject of prayer. The object and the subject, the offerer and the hearer of prayer, have been alike mistaken and misrepresented. Superstition has discovered a thousand intercessors and substitutes to aid an act, which, if properly performed, has to do exclusively with the individual and with the Hearer of prayer. The chief ecclesiastic in a neighbouring kingdom—a kingdom which boasts of its intelligence—commanded, last week, that prayer should be made to secure the intercession of the Virgin Mary, and the patroness saint of the capital of that kingdom, to avert a pestilence which was carrying off the population in thousands. In our own city similar intercessors are daily invoked, and similar orders ecclesiastically enforced. But without going the absurd lengths of Roman Catholic prescription, there are in too many Protestant churches and by Protestant teachers the most erroneous ideas entertained of the nature of prayer. Some pray to God the Father, as if God the Son and God the Spirit were not equally to be adored. Some not only repudiate human intercessors but also the Divine Mediator, the man Christ Jesus. Some will have it that believers only should pray—an idea that involves the absurdity that no man has a right to pray till he is sure he is saved. Some think the Spirit is not to be supplicated to convert the world, because, say they, he is only given to them who believe. It matters not to such that He, whose gift the Spirit is, said, before he left the world, that when he comes he will convince the world of sin, they, in opposition to the great Teacher, say that the word alone converts the world. Some will pray only with those they consider believers, which, in plain English, generally means that they will pray with none but those who believe some crotchet which they entertain, and others will not pray with any one. Prayer they divest of all form, and are in what they consider always a praying frame. The special seasons of prayer which Christ and Apostles and Christians of every age observed, they can dispense with, having reached a higher measure of spirituality! Such being the mistakes entertained of this exercise, and such being the importance of prayer, that every man who pretends to be religious has his own ideas of it, it is with no ordinary satisfaction that we give the outline of a discourse on this all-

important subject—a discourse which, as we will afterwards see, contains more common sense and more Scripture truth regarding this subject than will be found in whole volumes of divinity. The text was the prayer of Jabez, as recorded in 1 Chron. iv. 9 (Jabez called on God, &c.). The preacher commenced by saying that the first few chapters of this book of Chronicles are full of names and genealogies, which, though seemingly less profitable than other parts of revelation, are necessary to prove the descent of Christ from the house of David and tribe of Judah. Our text is a green spot in the desert to refresh the wearied and exhausted traveller—a precious passage amid a wilderness of names. It gives a very attractive view of the character and conduct and privilege of an Old Testament believer. The inspired penman, while he passes by thousands, stops at Jabez, and records his faith and holiness, and embalms him in perpetual remembrance. The text first gives his name; and names among the Jews were often given to perpetuate events. Jabez means sorrow—a name his mother gave him, for reasons she states in the context. We are next told that he was more honourable than his brethren. They may have been honourable, but he was yet more honourable. Whether he had earned fame as a warrior, or as a judge or governor, or as a man of talent, we are not informed; but he was honourable as a man of piety and devotion, and the text is his monumental pillar, and will hold his name in everlasting remembrance. God has ever honoured prayer, and taken frequent occasion to mention its efficacy and power. Even in this catalogue of names a praying Jabez could not be passed over unmarked. He is singled out as a man of prayer, though he lived amid the clouds and shadows of a typical dispensation. We shall first explain the import of Jabez's prayer, and then direct attention to its success. The prayer of Jabez deserves consideration. Whether it was offered as he set out in life, or on some momentous occasion in his history, or whether it was the substance of his frequent prayers, we are not informed, nor is it of any consequence for us to know. The text teaches us that he was a man of prayer; and the prayer given contains all the attributes of real prayer. By comparing our own feelings and desires with those of

Jabez, we may ascertain our real state before God. This prayer of Jabez is characterised by four things—By its humility, comprehensiveness, earnestness, and faith. Each of these particulars was illustrated at considerable length, and with much propriety, and then he went on to say that those blessings wear best that are given in answer to prayer. The last part of the verse is not the language of Jabez, but the testimony of the Spirit of God. It is no easy matter for us to know when our prayers are answered; but God knows. Sometimes God sees a prayer answered when the petitioner is writing bitter things against himself, and thinks his prayer shut out. God blesses his people in Christ, and he blesses them universally, eternally, and unchangeably. Think, then, of the happiness of those blessed of God. Such are blessed indeed. Let them remember their obligations to redeeming love. The blessings were procured at the expense of Immanuel's blood. We cannot buy them, but we may beg them, and we ought to make suitable returns. We pour out a prayer when his chastening is upon us, but when relief is given we soon forget his mighty works. Cherish a deep sense of unworthiness. Live more to Christ. What had we been, even after we were brought to Christ, without showers of blessings? Sins of omission and commission have been numerous, and yet we are allowed to cherish the hope of glory. Say, then, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed! Are there any present who never pray? They lie down and rise, they go out and come in, they plan and purpose, without calling on God. What if your name was announced just now? It will be announced before a larger meeting—before assembled worlds. Christ purchased the privilege of prayer. Many perish rather than pray. O ask, that ye may receive; seek, that ye may find; knock, that it may be opened.

The sermon was over at twenty-five minutes to one, having occupied fifty minutes. After the concluding services the congregation was dismissed at a quarter to one.

The above is as correct in sentiment as it is neat in arrangement and apt in illustration. In these days when superficial and flippant theological discoverers are opposing stereotyped phraseology, it is encouraging to find preachers of sufficient

independence, on the one hand, to think for themselves, and to express themselves in language of their own, who have no ambition, on the other hand, to become leaders of parties. The above discourse is not trammelled with scholastic theology, and, at the same time, it is free of pretended novelties. The ideas of the discourse all spring naturally from the text, and are alike consonant to common sense and evangelical doctrine. The sermon is full of important thought vigorously expressed. The great strength of it lies in its practical character, while the discourse was strictly textual, and, at the same time, thoroughly practical. The prayer of Jabez was so discussed as to appear a prayer which every one should offer. On the earnestness of the prayer the illustration was stirring and powerful. The cases of Jacob with the angel, and of the Syropheneccian woman with the Saviour, were presented most vividly, and so as to encourage the most hopeless to perseverance in prayer. The use he made of the latter case was, that instead of taking the vantage ground of a believer in approaching the throne, the more beseeming attitude is that of the publican, who smote on his breast, and said, God be merciful to me a sinner. The same fact is brought out in what is said of those who approach God as the God of their *preference* and *choice*, when unable to claim Him as their *covenant* God. However ill these views square with certain creeds and crotchets, they agree with the facts, doctrines, principles and precepts, of the holy oracles. We recommend those who wish to understand the nature and character of prayer to ponder this discourse. So much for the sermon, and now as to the preacher. The first glimpse the stranger takes of him in the pulpit recalls the image of the lamented Chalmers. The contour is that of the doctor in miniature. The outline is the same, though the features are smaller and milder. There is also not a little similarity of attitude and gesture during the preliminary exercises. The same rapid movements and the same restlessness characterise him when sitting during the singing. The only mental attribute which struck us as similar was that of earnestness. The preacher completely throws his soul into his subject. His is more than the earnestness of the man who wishes to make an impression—it is the earnestness of one who obviously speaks

because he believes, and who feels the force of the message he delivers. His voice frequently trembles under the force of overflowing feeling, and his every attribute and gesture are in strict keeping with the strugglings of the inner man. His discourse displayed considerable mental power. The illustrations showed that he thinks closely and accurately, and in language always nervous and popular. Occasionally, indeed, there was a boldness of thought that indicated more than mere talent. For instance, when referring to a young person whose name had been mentioned, he prayed that if his days were shortened on earth the remainder of them might be added to the years of eternity. The idea of adding to eternity is bold but beautiful. It is the same as the sentiment of Addison, *Eternity's too short to utter Jehovah's praise.* Several similar instances occurred in the course of his discourse, and which prove his mind imaginative, poetical, and daring. His prayers were particularly good, and betrayed a devout and energetic spirit. They were out of the usual form of pulpit prayers, and possessed a vigorous individuality, and seemed the outpouring of a mind deeply exercised in divine things. The only drawback on his popularity is an imperfect pronunciation. Were that equal to his thought and style, we know few preachers that we would compare with him. It is very likely, however, that, like a greater than he "he despises the graces of speaking, and wishes to know no grace but divine." Even a Chalmers was not careful of the details of speaking, but his genius and fancy compensated for every minor drawback. Chalmers, however, was not great because he neglected the accomplishments of the orator—he was great despite that neglect, and would have been greater still had he remedied it. It deserves special notice that those who cannot discover beauties are very sharpeighted in discovering blemishes. To this must be ascribed the fact that the subject of our sketch is almost wholly unknown beyond the bounds of his own congregation. Who ever heard of his long speeches in church courts, and who ever saw him taking part in a public meeting? And yet he is a most diligent and faithful and successful pastor of a large and attached flock, and probably few ministers are better qualified to give advice on any important subject connected with ecclesi-

astical matters. The fact is, he is, and always has been, greatly too much unknown. The blame of this partly rests with himself and partly with his brethren in the ministry. His deposition is retiring, sensitive, and recluse ; and even this notice may do violence to his feelings, and be considered an intrusion on his retirement. But violation of feeling is quite legitimate when that feeling springs from mistaken views. He is greatly too much given to conceal himself from the public, and we do a duty to the public by attempting to extend his sphere beyond his own congregation. Our *fine* clergymen will not urge him to public effort. The shallow, and loquacious, and noisy, are applauded ; but real talent and real worth are encouraged to conceal themselves. We cannot but indignantly ask, when we see the time of his ordination dated at 1819, and when we see him preside over one of our largest congregations, and when we hear his vigorous and common sense thoughts couched in nervous phraseology, where has he been for the last thirty years, and how has he managed to keep himself from the public ? He is no doubt doing a great work, but he might do it still better to mix more in general matters.

His monastic life tends to contract his ideas and enfeeble a mind formed for a wide field of operation. To one in his position such notices as the above must appear supremely bold, for he must consider himself and his work secret, and beyond the province of the press. An important end will be gained by this sketch if he shall be induced to become the man of public effort as well as the minister of untiring zeal—if he shall henceforth occupy that commanding position to which his talents and energy so obviously destine him.

Mr Currie was born in the neighbourhood of Airdrie in the year 1797. He was ordained in 1819 by the Old Light Burgher Presbytery of Glasgow at Cumbernauld. In 1835 he was translated to East Campbell Street congregation, Glasgow, where he laboured till he joined the Church of Scotland in 1840. At the time of the disruption he and his people left the Establishment. Free Stockwell Church was opened in 1842. It contains sittings for 1050, all of which are let. The number of communicants is about 700.

REV. ROBERT H. CRAIG,

LATE OF DUNFERMLINE.

IN the present day there is a great thirst, at least in our towns and cities, for intellectual preaching. This is doubtless, the natural consequence of that advanced and advancing intelligence which pervades every class of the community, bespeaking an honourable elevation in mental attainments. Philosophical institutions, lecture rooms, and public libraries, have given an impulse to the mind of the people stimulating to intellectual pursuits and acquirements, which have raised the mass of the community to a high position in the scale of intelligence. This progress in knowledge and mental cultivation has rendered the duties of the pulpit more arduous and difficult than in days gone by. The style of preaching accounted popular half a century ago would now fail to please and instruct. Force of argument, beauty of illustration, elegance of diction, and an agreeable manner, are almost indispensable to the success of the public instructor—and much more than an ordinary degree of talents and mental culture is requisite now to a creditable appearance in the pulpit. This prevailing demand for intellectual and highly-finished discourses is in danger, however, of being carried to excess. The primary object of the preacher is “to show unto men the way of salvation,” and he is unfaithful to his trust who casts the truths of the gospel in the shade by any display of mere human learning, however acceptable it might be to many a hearer, and however highly it might contribute to his own renown. Every art which he employs must tend to elucidate and enforce the great fundamental truth that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save

sinners," a theme which the spiritually-minded man will enjoy with a keener relish, though touched with an humble hand, than the most highly-finished and logical oration where Christ is not proclaimed. The preacher, to be acceptable and useful, must no doubt adapt his instructions to the audience which he addresses, but it is his duty to guide their habits of thought and feeling, and when they run in a wrong channel, to bend or restrain their course. He must never pander to a vitiated taste, nor seek to gratify false and unreasonable expectations. Above all, he must not lose sight of the grand design of the pulpit. The standard of duty which guided the great apostle of the Gentiles is the model presented for his imitation. A wise and faithful preacher will make all his instructions bear upon "Jesus Christ and him crucified," as the sum and substance of his high commission. This will be the sun and centre of his system, and will diffuse light, and warmth, and energy, and fertility, through all his public ministrations; it will form the corner stone of every fabric which he rears.

Young preachers are often prone to be led away by false standards and false tastes, and it is a great point gained when a correct judgment is formed of the duties of the pulpit and the end to be accomplished by it. The subject of our present sketch seems to have a correct apprehension of both. Though comparatively young, his judgment upon the nature and importance of his work seems mature. On the afternoon of Sabbath week he occupied Dr Wardlaw's pulpit. The subject of discourse was the words in 1 Tim. i. 11, "The glorious gospel." The preacher commenced by observing that this is a subject worthy of an angel's tongue, at the simple mention of which every heart should glow with admiration, gratitude, and joy: and though it comes to us divested of every charm of novelty, still there is no subject within the range of human knowledge so valuable and important. To such of you as have experienced the gospel's power and sweetness, none is more precious, since it is the divinely appointed means whereby the new and spiritual life within you derives its nourishment and growth and vigour. To such as have not felt and enjoyed the efficacy of the gospel, none can be more suitable; for it is only by means of knowing and believing it that sinners can be saved. Without an en-

lightened perception and cordial reception of it, you can have no pardon, no peace with God, no hope of heaven.—L The gospel is glorious, because it reveals the glory of the divine character. It shines in the face of Jesus Christ,—the great subject of the gospel. He embodied God in man—the divine in the human, and gave forth a living and palpable manifestation of the invisible Deity. “He was the brightness of his Father’s glory and the express image of his person.” 1st, We see the glory of God revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. In all he did and said we behold the perfect God and the perfect man, and have the Divinity revealed as far as was possible through the medium of man to man. “No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him.” 2nd, The glory of the divine character is further conspicuously revealed by the death of Jesus Christ. Here the various attributes of Deity are reflected as in a mirror in their highest excellence and splendour—the love of God to guilty man in not sparing his own Son but delivering him up for us all—the justice of God in making to meet upon the head of this holy victim the iniquities of us all—the holiness of God in thus expressing his abhorrence of sin and exhibiting its awful malignity and turpitude by putting his well-beloved and only-begotten Son to death on account of it. Here angels learned a deeper insight into the character of God and the evil of sin than they had before, and let us seek to learn the same lesson. Here we behold justice crowned with honour, mercy triumphant, wisdom most profound, and holiness shining with distinguished lustre and unparalleled beauty. And here all the attributes of God are harmoniously blended—their various rays are collected into a central point, so that the glory of God, meaning by that expression the combined beauty of the divine perfections, is conspicuously manifested. Here “mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

* * * “With outstretch’d arms
Stern justice and soft-smiling love embrace,
Supporting in full majesty his throne,
When seem’d its majesty to need support,
Or that, or man, inevitably lost.”

II. It is glorious, because it reveals God's method of justifying the sinner. In it the divine method of justification, which is by faith, is revealed in order to be believed. (Rom. xvi. 17.) It sets forth the atonement of the Son of God as the ground of the sinner's acceptance before God. It tells us that "God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us"—our sin offering—"that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Through him it proclaims forgiveness to the guilty. And "by him all that believe are justified"—not only pardoned, but divinely accepted—received into the favour and friendship of God and treated as righteous persons. (1.) This method of justifying the ungodly is, therefore, glorious for its simplicity and suitability. It is not by works or by merit, but by faith. (2.) It is glorious also for its holy consistency. For it is in admirable harmony with all the perfections of the divine character and the principles of the divine government. God is declared as just while the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. It humbles man and honours God. (3.) It is glorious, moreover, on account of its universality. It is "unto all," Gentile as well as Jew, "and upon all them that believe."

III. It is glorious, because it produces a holy transformation of character in every genuine believer. "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid (by no means): yea, we establish the law." The faith of the gospel effectually secures obedience to God—it works by love, and love is the fulfilment of the whole law—it purifies the heart, and implants in it the principles of holiness. It is aptly described "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." It is the divinely-appointed instrument of saving men from the dominion of sin. It is the seal of the Holy Spirit's graces. It is the heavenly mould into which the mind of the believer is re-cast. It is the mirror in which we behold the glory of the Lord, and which is reflected back on the beholder, and so changes him into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. O what a glorious transformation of character the gospel, wherever it takes effect, produces! The sinner, once dead in trespasses and sins, becomes animated with life divine—the soul, once darkness, become irradiated with celestial light—the heart, once disordered and alienated

from God, and desperately wicked, is rectified and purified and filled with love to God—the once distracted and miserable mind is filled with peace and joy—the obstinate rebel becomes an obedient subject—the heir of perdition an heir of heaven! “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Do you ask a proof of this? Think, then, of the degraded savage—the ferocious cannibal brought out of the vice and bondage in which he was so long immured, and introduced into the light and liberty of the glorious gospel. Here the preacher described the moral condition of the savage while a stranger to the gospel, and said, Do we not almost despair of such a monster as this ever being brought to feel and act like a humane and upright moral agent? But let us look at him again after he has listened to the message of the gospel accompanied with divine influence. Here he drew a graphic picture of the gospel’s transforming power and instanced Africanor in confirmation of it. He adverted to the moral effects of the gospel in the first ages of Christianity, and in heathen countries, in modern times, and how it had elevated civilized communities, and what it was yet destined to accomplish in the regeneration of mankind. He held up to view the great change implied in conversion, and urged its necessity and importance on his audience, and expounded and applied the ethics of the gospel on the practical observance of Christians. He said the gospel aims at the destruction of selfishness so predominant in man, and seeks to implant in his bosom the principles of holy and generous love. It requires that the same mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus. And it renounces and unchristianizes all who cannot bear this test—saying “If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his.” IV. The gospel is worthy of being designated glorious, because of its rich consolations, its precious privileges, and its ennobling prospects. (1.) How rich and abundant are the consolations it imparts! (2.) How precious are its privileges! (3.) And Oh how ennobling are the prospects it unfolds! The preacher illustrated those particulars at some length, then concluded by addressing an appeal to the unbelieving and Christian portion of the assembly respectively.

We have endeavoured, in this abridged form of the discourse, to preserve the line of thought pursued by the preacher, from which it appears that his chief object was to exhibit the general character and excellence of the gospel in its nature and in its results. That object was, upon the whole, successfully attained. The discourse possessed many excellencies, and, from its scriptural and practical character, was calculated to be useful. The preacher's view of the gospel scheme is comprehensive, accurate, and influential. Hence, from his knowledge, theoretical and experimental, of its value, he urges it by every powerful motive upon the acceptance of his hearers. He seeks to win men from the error of their ways by the persuasive power of love rather than to terrify them into compliance by the thunders and lightnings of Sinai. The gospel he views as a system founded in love, and productive of love—a system not hostile to human liberty, but conducive to man's best freedom and happiness, a system intended and adapted to slay the enmity of the human heart, and to regenerate the world. The transforming influence of the gospel was ably and eloquently illustrated and practically enforced. The doctrinal views expounded were quite evangelical. The way of a sinner's acceptance and the necessity of a moral change were clearly and earnestly shown. An intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, and an accurate and discriminating knowledge of their import, were also characteristic of the discourse.—We readily infer that Mr Craig's mind is more imaginative than metaphysical in its character, that it delights more in synthesis than analysis, and excels in description and illustration. When he reasons, he gives the *results* rather than the *process*, and conveys them through the imagination. Hence, when he argues, he frequently takes his hearers by surprise, because of the rapidity and conclusiveness with which he defends and establishes his positions. He not only appreciates poetic excellence in others, as is manifest by his quotations from, and allusions to, many of our favourite authors, but sometimes spreads his wings himself, and takes an upward flight; and these efforts are, upon the whole, not without a considerable measure of success. The imagination, though lively, is under the guidance of a correct judgment and a

deep devotional feeling, so that his discourses never fail to please by their elegant and chaste style, to instruct by their richness in gospel truth, and to elevate the affections by the deep-toned piety which they breathe. That the respectability of his pulpit appearances may depend much upon study we regard as a hopeful symptom, giving promise of future eminence and usefulness; and, if spared to reach his meridian altitude, though he may not shine with a brilliancy that dazzles the eye and attracts universal admiration, will emit a clear and steady light, more conducive to purposes of real utility than the meteor's overpowering but fitful glare. Mr Craig's manner is good; his gestures are natural, easy, and effective, but might be improved by being a little more varied. His voice, though not powerful, is pleasant and well modulated, and the distinctness of his utterance renders him perfectly audible throughout a pretty large building. His pronunciation, with a few slight exceptions, is quite correct, and his style of delivery being happily free of provincialisms, is formed more after an English than a Scotch model.

Mr Craig was brought up in connection with the Secession, now the United Presbyterian body, and has had greater educational advantages than most of the preachers with whom he is now associated. After having gone through the full course of study in Glasgow University, he entered the Divinity Hall in 1838, where he enjoyed for four sessions the able instructions of Drs Balmer and Brown, and the other eminent professors of that institution. In the end of 1840 the church in Berwick, under the charge of Dr Balmer, secured his services as town missionary, and for nearly three years he occupied this useful field, in which his labours were highly satisfactory. About this period his views of church government underwent a change, which resulted in his relinquishing the Presbyterian and joining the Independent body. In this new connection his first charge was the church in Lerwick, over which he presided with much success for nearly three years, and, in 1847, whilst on a visit to Paisley, his native place, for the purpose of restoring his declining health and strength, he received a cordial invitation from the church in Dunfermline to become their pastor. That invitation he felt it his duty to ac-

cept. Under his auspices the church there continued to prosper, until a few weeks ago, when some misunderstanding unfortunately arose, which rendered the continuance of their connection, as pastor and flock, unadvisable, if not impossible ; he accordingly resigned his charge in July last. It speaks well for Mr Craig that during his incumbency in Dunfermline he maintained the most friendly intercourse with the ministers of all denominations, not excepting the established clergymen of the town, by most of whom he has been kindly assisted in his pulpit duties. We understand Mr C. contemplates proceeding to England, and we have no doubt, from his respectable abilities, his liberal education, and his industrious and studious habits, united to a fervent piety, and when a suitable field opens up, he will fill it creditably to himself and acceptably to his people.

SEPTEMBER 11, 1849.

P. S.—Shortly after the publication of the above, Mr C. accepted a unanimous invitation from the Congregational Church at Deal, in Kent, where he now labours with every prospect of increasing usefulness and permanent success. The town of Deal stands upon the sea coast immediately opposite that far-famed roadstead the “Downs,” where ships of all nations ride in safety, when waiting for favourable winds.

The Congregational Church at Deal took its rise in the early times of British Nonconformity, and it was for many years the only agency in the town for holding forth the word of life in its purity. The late Rev. John Vincent was its pastor for upwards of forty years, to whose pious life and labours pure and undefiled religion in Deal has been much indebted for its advancement.

Mr Craig has already made large advances in the esteem and affections of the people of Deal. His sermons are intellectual and eminently practical ; pure and simple in diction ; and delivered with affectionate earnestness for the salvation of immortal souls. The attendance has greatly increased since his settlement, and many have been added to the church.

REV. ANDREW GRAY,

DUMBARTON.

MOTHER Kirk has now stood the tear and wear of centuries, and has given to the world a pretty numerous family who have broken off from their allegiance. Whether she is in the vale of years, or whether she be still in her prime, is a problem that admits of various solutions in accordance with various modes of thinking. One thing, however, is clear that comparatively few symptoms of decay are to be found in her pulpit ministrations. If evangelical doctrine, enlightened sentiment, talent, earnestness, learning, and devout feeling, be characteristic qualities of a sound gospel minister, the Establishment has many such. It would be presumptuous in any one to say that he could not attend because Christ is not preached, or because the doctrines there taught are anti-scriptural, though there may be other justifiable reasons for non-adherence to her communion. She has long had within her pale many sincere and good men, whom all good men honour, and we are but stating a generally-admitted fact when we say that she has so still. The character of our times admits of no inaction in any body of men whether lay or clerical, nor in this respect is the Establishment behind other bodies. We have no hesitation in stating this from what came under our observation last Sabbath in the Established Church of Dumbarton. At a quarter past eleven o'clock the congregation was assembled, and a few minutes afterwards he whose name stands at the head of these remarks appeared in the pulpit. After praise and prayer he read, in a very effective manner, the 8th chapter of Proverbs. Another Psalm was then sung, after which he gave

out for exposition Heb. viii. 10, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." This was a continuation of a series of discourses illustrative of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. The preacher briefly recalled to the minds of his hearers the leading features of previous lectures on the nature of the covenant of grace, and then proceeded to show how God makes over to his people, as their own property, all the persons of the God-head. God makes over himself, in the person of the Father, to be our God and Father in Christ—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again," &c. God the Father has made over himself—I will be to him a Father. This is spoken of Christ, and therefore he is called by the apostle the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour ; and in this way he is our Father and God. We are not only related to Christ, but by him to the Father. And as we are to exercise faith upon Christ under all relations, so we are also privileged to exercise faith upon the Father. And these relations are honourable as well as comfortable to the saints. Now, what is there in this relation which God, as a Father, sustains to his people? We must see what it was to Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father, and then we shall the more clearly see how, in all things, he is a Father unto us—even as he is to Christ—though in a more humble way, for Christ in all things must have the pre-eminence. The preacher then proceeded at great length to illustrate this relationship ; and how the Son and the Spirit are also made over to us—1st, From the union of a saint with all the persons of the God-head ; 2d, From the distinct communion of the saints with all the persons in the Godhead ; 3d, By those distinct acts of office which the persons in the glorious Trinity have undertaken for the good of the saints—and from the latter were deduced the following particulars :—That our happiness might appear to consist in the vision and fruition of them all—that the soul may honour them distinctly. That a man in this life may exercise distinct acts of faith upon all the persons of the

glorious Trinity—that we may honour them in our prayers distinctly—that the soul may have a distinct fellowship with all the persons in the Godhead. In conclusion, Learn from this subject that the people of God are all rich in a spiritual sense. They are in themselves poor, and wretched, and miserable, and naked—yea drowned in debt to law and justice, but by having God as their covenant God they become possessed of unsearchable riches—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. All the attributes of God are yours—all the persons in the Godhead are yours—and, therefore, Christ is yours; and if so, his blood is yours. O believer, his righteousness is thine—his great love is thine—his fulness is thine—the fruitfulness of his sufferings—the virtue of all his offices—the sweetness of all his relations—the perfection of his righteousness—the sufficiency of his satisfaction—the suitableness of his offer—the preciousness of his promises—and the prevalency of his intercession—are all, all of them, yours—life, death, time, and eternity, are yours. What a goodly heritage hast thou, O believer!

Our space prevents our giving more of this fine discourse. It occupied about an hour in the delivery, and the church was dismissed shortly after one o'clock. Public worship was recommenced at two o'clock, when, after the usual introductory services, there was given out, for text, Philippians iii. 8, "Yea doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

The preacher commenced by saying that those are the sweet strains of a gospel spirit giving vent to itself in expressing a dear love to Christ, and a high esteem for him alone—advancing him above all—giving him the throne, and making all competition his footstool. The occasion of them we may find in the preceding verses. There were some teachers amongst them who carried on a pernicious design to corrupt the doctrines of the gospel, and dishonour Christ by joining with him the works and observances of the law in point of justification and salvation. To prevent the evil consequences of such an improper medley, the apostle gives them

this important advice—1st, To rest joyful in Christ alone—to embrace him with delight, and rest satisfied in his righteousness, the all-sufficiency of his undertaking and performance, for pardon and glory. The preacher then shortly commented on these verses. The 7th and 8th verses he characterised as the apostle's bill of rates. There are two things very observable in these verses—how he doubles his words to express the strength of his affection as well as the settledness of his judgment—and how his expressions rise:—"What things were gain to me I counted loss for Christ;"—as if that were not sufficiently strong he continues, yea doubtless—an asseveration not more unusual than strong—no fewer than five Greek particles put together, and yet no pleonasm, nor any of them expletive, unless to set forth his fuller certainty and settledness in this particular. He had weighed Christ in the one balance and all things else in the other, and they, in comparison, proved lighter than vanity itself. Things in a storm, though in themselves very precious, may be lost, and willingly cast overboard to save human life, but if it be nothing but offal that is so cast away there will be less danger of repenting the sacrifice. Yet such is the apostle's esteem of all things in comparison of Christ, that he calls them but dung—vile and corruptible. If he brought them—that is, all his honours and advantages as a Jew and a Pharisee—before God's tribunal, to be pardoned, justified, and saved by them, he had been lost. God would no more accept of those as satisfaction for sin than he would accept of what is here expressed. The apostle would not lean upon those broken reeds which might precipitate his soul into that place where God has forgotten to be gracious. He did not only account them loss, but he had actually lost them, and yet accounted himself no loser, but a happy gainer by the bargain—that I may gain Christ. We have the cause of this strange affection—the excellency of the knowledge of Christ —where we have the act, knowledge—the object, Christ Jesus the Lord—and the application he makes thereof, *my* Lord. When we are in the dark we are glad of the light of a taper, but when the sun has risen in his full strength, then this light seems needless—nay it becomes offensive; so when men are in a state of nature—of moral and spiritual darkness—thea

their church privileges and carnal prerogatives, their outward performances and self-righteousness, make a plausible appearance in their own estimation; but when the Sun of righteousness arises in the heart and discovers his excellency, then men's own feeble sparks vanish—then all formerly esteemed ornaments are cut off—then all they have done otherwise is but loss and dung. Here we have the thing purchased or valued—the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; and again, the price at which he valued it—the loss of all things. O what a pity that these should be parted—that so rich a pearl should not find such a wise merchant rightly to merit it! and as they are joined in the text I shall consider them together. I shall then show, 1st, What that knowledge of Christ is which is so excellent. It is not every knowledge, or even every knowledge of Christ, that is so excellent. The devils and the reprobates living under the gospel have some apprehension of Christ, and so have the elect before conversion, which is not this excellent knowledge which the apostle enjoyed, and I shall confine my illustrations to such as he discovered in these verses—particularly in the text. I. The knowledge of Christ, which is excellent, is extensive, apprehends him under all those notions and in all those respects wherein the gospel principally discovers him—a whole Christ—his person, God, man, in himself and offices, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church. This opens up to our view far too wide a field for present contemplation. We have three words which the apostle uses to comprise all or most of the rest—Christ, Jesus, Lord. 1st, His nature and offices are included in the word Christ—the Messiah whom the Lord hath anointed to be Mediator. To know Christ is to know him as the sent, sealed, and anointed of God; and here the believing soul views the divine authority of his commission in that he is given of the Father to be a Prophet, Priest and King. There is nothing Christ commands more frequently in the New Testament than this faith in his divine mission—his divine ordination to his mediatory work—"I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou has sent me," &c. 2d, The intention and execution of his offices are included in the word Jesus—a Saviour—the first name given to Christ in the New Testa-

ment, and the best that a sinner can ever hear of. To know him as Jesus is to know him as a universal Saviour. I mean not only in the apostle's sense, that he is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe; but I mean in respect of the salvation he brings to those whom he makes to believe in him—"by him all who believe are" saved, and "justified from all things." 3rd, The consequents of his offices, &c., are included in the word Lord—that is, dominion in Christ, subjection in us. We have both in the word Lord. Many will take notice of Christ as a Saviour, but not as a Lord, but this is to view Christ as under an eclipse, to apprehend him without his crown, and so is not this excellent knowledge of Christ. II. This knowledge is not only extensive but appropriating, so we have Jesus Christ *my* Lord. The marrow of the gospel, as Luther observes, is in these pronouns *mine*, *ours*, and these he evidently invites us to read with great emphasis. To apprehend him yours upon good grounds is the excellency of this knowledge. The preacher illustrated this head at considerable length. III. This knowledge is effectual—has a powerful efficacy upon heart, life, and judgment. We discover all these effects in the apostle, and this excellent knowledge possessed him with contempt for every thing else. When it shines in the soul the greatest worldly glory appears but as a glow-worm in comparison of the sun in its noon-day brightness. The chiefest desire of him who has this excellent knowledge is to be found in Christ. He cares not though he be found in prison—found covered with reproaches—found environed with afflictions—in the midst of the most hideous misery, agonising woe, or appalling scenes to which man can be exposed in this sinful world—cares not for all these that he may be found in Christ. This was the apostle's temper. He exults and triumphs, even as a pauper who has discovered some rich mine is ready to leap for joy that he has found that which will raise him above the miseries of want. He now parts with his former rags, and secures for himself such things as will afford him comfort and peace. So he to whom the Lord has made this excellent discovery has found a mine more precious than gold and more extensive than the earth, and which will make him happy for ever. IV. It is an

experimental knowledge, joined with sense. We now see the promised land, not as in a map, but as travellers who have been there, and like the Samaritans of old have come personally to Christ. We must be able to say with Job, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. I have found Christ in reality to myself—I know, I feel, that what he hath said in his word is true—there is that in my heart which contradicts such and such doctrines which are contrary to it, so that when I cannot answer the cavils of the sceptic and the reproaches of the profane, yet my heart denies their conclusions. When I come to read and hear the Scriptures it reminds me of two men reading from two copies of the same evidence—the original I find in the Bible, and the counterpart I find in my heart, and therefore I dare sign and seal it with my blood. V. This excellent knowledge is fiducial—confident without any degree of doubt. It brings the soul to rest upon Christ alone for salvation and all that the soul stands in need of for time and for eternity, and to cast away all those broken props—good nature—well meaning—harmless life, &c., which were formerly relied on. Who more confident than was Saul of Tarsus previous to conversion?—who ever thought himself more sure of heaven?—but when the joyful discovery was made to his soul he had no more confidence in the flesh. VI. This excellent knowledge is useful. He who has it studies to make use of Christ for the glorious purposes for which he was given, &c.;—and then the preacher concluded by exhorting his hearers not to seek the knowledge of Christ merely to increase their stock of knowledge; that may be the end of a vain-glorious mind; but to seek to know him that you may enjoy him more, improve him better, and gain more heavenly and spiritual advantages by him.

The preacher was particularly careful to bring out the apostle's meaning by reference to the context. Having shortly commented on the preceding verses in such a manner as to give the hearers a clear view of the text in its relative bearings, he proceeded to illustrate it more fully, by enumerating those things in which the knowledge of the excellency of Christ consists. These again were taken up in rotation, argumentatively commented on, and substantiated by various passages of Scrip-

ture, and the whole summed up in reference to the unspeakable happiness which believers experience whose knowledge of the excellency of Christ is of such a character. All other things that man can gain will be but loss if this knowledge be wanting. The reasoning was strictly logical, but not abstruse or encumbered with scholastic technicalities, and the language plain, so that all could understand. So far, then, as the framework of the discourse is concerned, it was unexceptionable, and, as to the views held forth, they must be regarded as strictly evangelical, as the above outline will testify. Yet a discourse may be theologically sound and logically correct, and, at the same time, be feeble, dry, and uninteresting. It must have within it life and spirit, or it will be incapable of reaching the heart, or in any way influencing the conduct of those who hear it. It may be transparent as pure water, and flow on with all the ease and grace of a river, yet, at the same time, it may be like a river in winter, its banks fringed with icicles, blackened by frosts, and sprinkled with the snows. This was the state of matters out of doors, but not so in the church. It is true we had no strikingly new or gorgeous vision of hill or dale, of mountain and plain, or torrid sunburst, striking down and melting all into one overwhelming flood of glory. But the prospect was rich, pleasing, and genial. No coldness, no barrenness, but everywhere around there was life, vigour, and animation; the works of man and the works of God were so blended and united as to be at once pleasing to the eye, satisfactory to the judgment, and beneficial to the soul.

Mr Gray is not what is termed a flowery preacher; that is, he does not indulge in imaginative speculations, or step out of his way for the sake of producing poetical effects. He has more of the argumentative turn of mind; and his great aim seems to be to impart clear conceptions of the truths of revelation. This appears to be a prominent peculiarity of his ministrations, impelling him sometimes to analyse his subject with so much minuteness as to occasion a profusion of particulars. This was more apparent in the forenoon's discourse, and though it was characterised by equal clearness and precision of thought as a whole, it wanted that concentration which was so conspicuous in that of the afternoon. Yet in none of

them was there the least indication of loose or careless preparation. He does not seem to be one of the take-it-easy preachers either on week-days or on Sabbath-days, for the whole services were of the most substantial kind, both in regard to quantity and quality. In prayer he is particularly good. The sentiment was devout and solemn, and appeared to be the spontaneous outpouring of a devout heart. His style is dignified and elegant, and his pronunciation distinct and correct, and impresses one with the idea that his early days have been spent in the more refined circles. His voice is deep, rich, and to an extraordinary degree powerful, and penetrates every corner of his large church like the clang of a trumpet, and in the more declamatory parts of his discourse it approaches the sublime. It is altogether a majestic voice, and when once fairly set in motion it is no easy matter to stop it. It would run down a whole Presbytery of ordinary voices as easily as the Britannia or Great Britain steamer would run down a whole fleet of fishing-boats. In command he would be grand, in wrath, terrible; but there was nothing throughout the whole day's services to make us believe that he is ambitious of the one or prone to the other. However, his eloquence is not of the melting kind. He can impart knowledge with great effect, and we could suppose him capable of stirring multitudes to deeds of valour, or denouncing them until they quaked exceedingly; but we can scarcely suppose him capable of operating on an audience until their feelings eventuated in sighs and tears. His voice is too strong to be capable of the softer emotions. His manner is animated without much gesture, and though he uses notes, this circumstance in no way interferes with the ease and freedom of his delivery. In person he is tall and of full habit, with small eyes and broad forehead, surrounded with a soft streak of dark brown hair. His profile has a resemblance to portraits of Pitt the renowned statesman, and his general appearance is gentlemanly. He is evidently no weakling, either physically or mentally, and in every way appears admirably fitted to minister in the large and spacious church of Dumbarton. Though we have said that he is not a flowery preacher, he, nevertheless, occasionally runs into rhetorical currents of scriptural eloquence as captivating to the

feelings as they are useful to the judgment. He does not get into raptures about silvery rills, or murmuring cataracts, or fanning breezes, but he bursts forth into fervent flame when describing the Christian's triumphs over the world, the love of Christ to fallen man, and the goodness of God as shown in the Scriptures. Certain we are that no person could have returned from the church last Sabbath without being impressed with the idea that the minister did his duty.

Mr Gray was born in the parish of Bothwell; but his parents, a few years after, removing to Glasgow, he there received the whole of his education, with the exception of his last year, which he spent at the University of Edinburgh. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Glasgow in November, 1828, and, shortly after, was appointed missionary in the parish of Old Monkland. His success was so great that a chapel was erected by subscription, to which he was unanimously appointed, and was ordained as pastor in 1835. During the eight years of his ministrations in this place, he received many substantial tokens of the esteem and attachment of his people; was five different times requested to stand candidate for vacant churches, and, in every instance, had the highest number of votes. As an instance of the respect in which he was held, we may mention that, at the disruption, only three or four of his congregation threatened to leave the church, but continued with him as long as he remained at Crosshill. He left this church crowded to the door with a highly-respectable congregation. He had the offer of several churches immediately after the secession, but, through the advice of his brethren, he was induced to accept of Dumbarton. The election was unanimous, and the call the most numerously signed that had ever been laid on the Presbytery table. In 1845, being appointed by the Presbytery to supply a vacancy within their bounds, in less than eight days after, a memorial, signed by nearly the whole parishioners, was presented to the patron, praying him to present Mr Gray to the parish; but that gentleman had promised the living to another. As an instance of the opinion of his brethren regarding Mr G. we may mention that, at the last meeting of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, he was, all but unanimously, elected Moderator. For the benefit of the poor

who plead the want of proper clothing to attend on Sabbath, he has a monthly week-day meeting in the church for prayer and exposition. A day in each week is given to visiting the jail prisoners.

JANUARY 13, 1849.

Mr Gray, during the winter of 1849, took an active part in defending the Protestant faith. The following notice of his efforts appeared in one of the newspapers:—

We learn, through the medium of a valued correspondent, that the Rev. Andrew Gray, minister of Dumbarton, and late Moderator of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, has of late been delivering, in Dumbarton and the neighbourhood, with much acceptability, a series of discourses on the Errors of Popery. It is with much pleasure that we communicate, by the favour of our correspondent, the conclusion of Mr Gray's series of discourses on Popery. It is to be hoped that the clergy of Scotland may devote a large share of their time to that subject. Mr Gray justly remarks—"In conclusion, Learn what we were delivered from at the glorious Revolution, and renew your thankfulness to God for it. Our religion is styled by the Papists the pestilent northern heresy; and their religion obliged them to extirpate the same to the utmost of their power. As this is their principle so it has ever been their practice whenever it has been in their power. The thunder of their decrees— sounding from the Vatican—has been usually attended with showers of blood. You can scarcely view a spot of ground on the map of Europe that has not been stained with blood of their shedding. You can scarcely open the history of any age since the man of sin was set up by himself above all that is called God, without meeting with some bloody tragedy acted upon these principles. What horrid persecutions have they been guilty of! Let the Albigenses, the Waldenses, and the massacres of Paris, and numerous others, bear testimony. When we were the devoted objects of their vengeance, the Prince of Orange appeared to our relief with the Protestant religion and the liberties of England in his standard, in his heart, and in his righteous cause. Learn, then, what you must expect upon the return of Popery in power. What can be expected from these principles and this spirit? Read the Book of Martyrs, the History of the French and Bohemian persecutions, and expect the dregs of that bitter cup that has gone round to so many churches in Europe. Read the History of the Inquisition, and expect all that is to be dreaded from a spirit of revenge—revenge for injury received, added to the instigation of a religion not only cruel in its nature, but making a merit of being so. The mere apprehension is dreadful; but still more so, when, in very deed, it is advancing with rapid strides in this nation, and under the sunshine and protection of those high in authority. We plead not for persecution for religious principles—this would be subversive of the foundation of society and civil government. Every faithful subject should be protected in his religion as well as in his civil rights; but if men's religion teaches them rebellion, surely the government ought to preserve itself. Is it not a well known maxim of Popery, and was decreed in the 19th session of the Council of Constance, that no faith is to be kept with heretics or Protestants; and our histories abundantly testify, that where they have had power they have religiously observed it, as appear by the violation of the edict of Nantes, in France, against the faith of the most solemn treaties. Be thankful to God for the privileges you enjoy; walk worthy of your obligations and privileges, that God may not be provoked to give up into the hands of men who, whenever they prevail, bring ruin and slavery, inquisitions and torture, with them; and whose true character is, that their tender mercies are cruelties."

LATE REV. JAMES STARK, D.D.,**DENNYLOANHEAD.**

THE advantages which an effective gospel ministry confers on a community can never be fully estimated. In order to sustain its benign and heavenly character it blesses men temporally as well as spiritually and eternally. This tangible evidence that the gospel is of God has been greatly overlooked. Facts are easier understood than arguments, and, to many minds, much more convincing. To some minds it is almost impossible to explain the subjective effects of the gospel on the mind and heart; but there are none incapable of understanding the objective effects of it on the face of a country, and on the temporal condition of its professors. The friends of Christianity can point out many a comparative wilderness which a gospel ministry has changed into a fruitful field. They can name localities which were blighted and barren till some man of God visited them, and they soon changed their aspect. The neglected fields were cultivated and became fruitful, and the indolent and degraded population started from their slumbers, and took their place in the ranks of civilised and enterprising men, and in tabernacles where the sounds of revelry and unhallow'd mirth had long a home the voice of joy and salvation is heard. The test of utility may be legitimately applied to the gospel. Where it fails to bless men temporally it will also fail to bless them spiritually. He who remains indolent and unenterprising is worse than an infidel; on the other hand, when the slothful becomes active, the profligate moral, the waster careful, there are those external symptoms which accompany the successful ministrations of the word. We refer with pleasure

to the scene of the ministrations of the subject of our sketch as a satisfactory proof that the gospel, which he has long preached, is from heaven.

Last Sabbath, at eleven o'clock, the usual services commenced in the church over which the venerable Dr Stark has presided as pastor above half a century. After part of the introductory services were gone through by his assistant he ascended the pulpit stairs, and having engaged in prayer, and given out a few verses for praise, he announced for his text, Psal. xii. 1, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth." This discourse was among the last, if not the very last, of the preacher's, and was one of great solemnity.

In discussing the character of the godly and faithful man he brought out much of that fine old racy divinity peculiar to the class of preachers with which he was associated in his younger days. With these there was extreme precision in stating the doctrinal parts of their discourses, and they were particularly careful in insisting on the subjective reception of the truth, as the cause of all moral and spiritual excellence. More modern schools would descant only on the objective conduct of the godly; but our preacher first settled, with much accuracy, a change of heart, and the reception of an imputed righteousness, as being at the foundation of all acceptable worship and all holy living. This good old divinity contrasts favourably with the flippancy of some modern discoverers in theology, who reduce subjective redemption to the belief of an insulated, and often inoperative, fact. Nor was our preacher less careful in pointing out the duties the Christian owes to his fellows than those he owes to God. The *faithful* he considers the aspect of the godly chiefly in relation to man. And how high and how impressive was the morality he enforced on the part of the faithful! Too many preachers seem to assume that if the heart is right the life will be right; but the Bible assumes no such thing. It teaches with much minuteness relative duties, and those who overlook this department preach but half the gospel. On the other divisions he was equally happy, both as to bringing out the meaning and to presenting the practical aspects of his text to the understanding and heart of his hearers.

When he came to speak of the decease of his friend and relative, Dr Stark of New York, his feelings occasionally overcame him, so that he had to pause frequently, and though he evidently made every effort to conceal his emotion, his whole frame quivered under intense feeling. He spoke of him not as a successful preacher, or as a man of letters (though his departed friend was in no respect behind his fellow-labourers), but he spoke of his love to God and his benevolence to man—of the evidence he gave in his life and in his last illness that his heart was right with God. He was most anxious to show that, as far as man can judge, he was an heir of the kingdom, and that he was merely gone a little before himself, at his Master's call.

In the year 1818, so far back as thirty years ago, Dr Stark published a volume of discourses on various important subjects; and from a perusal of them, as well as from hearing him preach on more occasions than one, we gather the following peculiarities of the preacher:—He possessed a presence in the pulpit. We speak of him in this respect more as to the past than later efforts. His appearance now is doubtless more venerable and heavenly than before. The emotions that were wont to manifest themselves in his countenance have now settled down into a calm and deep benevolence. The rosy health and buoyancy of summer have given place to the mellowness and maturity of autumn. The frame now but partially sympathises with the activity and energy of the mind. Wish we, then, to see a shock of corn fully ripe, an old Simeon exulting in the consolation of Israel, a Jacob blessing his sons as he waits for God's salvation? we have our desires gratified when we see the subject of our sketch blessing his children and children's children in the faith and hope of the gospel. But when we speak of his presence in the pulpit, we refer to the time when, with firm step, he ascended the pulpit stairs, and presented his strong, robust, and massive frame to the great congregation—when his large eyes sparkled with high health, when his strong voice pealed through the largest edifice, and when, without notes, he delivered with fluency, and ease, and energy, his racy and healthful ministrations. We still vividly remember a Sabbath evening (now ten years ago), when an

immense congregation, in Wellington Street United Presbyterian Church, felt, most evidently, the powers of the world to come under one of his happiest Sabbath evening discourses.

But a mere presence will not secure popularity nor usefulness. Some of the most commanding minds are very shabbily tabernacled; and, on the other hand, many a stately and stalwart frame is but poorly tenanted. In this case, the congruity, of which we have frequently spoken, between the external and internal is well sustained—a massive mind lodged in that massive brow. Of fancy and imagination he had but a comparatively small share; but in clearness of conception, in facility of expression, in popular and powerful argumentation, he had few superiors. He thought clearly, and, therefore, spoke intelligibly. As a preacher no one spoke of him as *deep*, because he was not "*drumlie*." His language was simple, and yet vigorous and nervous, and his sermons neat, varied, and often elegant. We have heard very green preachers talk of his sermons as common-place. We shall discuss that question with them after they keep up a large congregation half a century. His sermons betrayed both thought and care, and the mapping was often extremely neat and memorable. He generally placed distinct milestones for the direction of his hearers; and, if he erred, it was in super-abundant divisions and subdivisions. Still, these gave the people an opportunity to seize on some important fact or statement, and, as a consequence, they are well versed in Bible knowledge. He resisted all temptations to remove him. He became an immovable fixture. Nature seemed to join with his people in retaining him. The trees he planted around his manse speedily towered above it, and waved, as if to beckon him to remain at his post; and remain he did, and the sequel has justified his choice. A more intelligent and influential country congregation exists not, and the whole country side look up to him as a father and friend. As hinted in our introductory remarks, the face of the country owes much to his example and instructions. He awakened industry and enterprise. He discouraged vice, and was the means of promoting sobriety. He taught the people their duties, as subjects of government and members of the community. He was made

extensively useful, and on him has come the blessing of many ready to perish, who were rescued by his instrumentality.

Dr Stark is a native of Cumbernauld, and was brought up in that neighbourhood. After studying the usual time he was ordained as a preacher in the United Secession Church in 1797, fifty-two years ago, and has presided over the Dennyloanhead church during that long period. To show the high estimate in which he was held, he, for many years, assisted at the Sacraments in Wellington Street and also at East Regent Street Secession Churches, Glasgow, and was very popular in both. He was married to the sister of the late Dr Heugh, and was on the most intimate terms with all the clergymen of the Secession Church in our city. On the completion of his fifty years pastorate, very interesting jubilee services were observed in Dennyloanhead, and very general interest was felt in these services throughout the West of Scotland. During this summer a very remarkable circumstance occurred in his congregation. There are in the same Presbytery of Falkirk other two clergymen in the United Presbyterian Church who have had their jubilee services—the Rev. John Anderson, Kilsyth, and the Rev. James Harrower, Denny. On the forenoon of a Sabbath in August Dr Stark preached, and on the afternoon of the same day Mr Harrower preached to the Dennyloanhead congregation. It was certainly a novelty to see two such veterans of the same Presbytery in the pulpit on the same day. Dr Stark was in the 52d year of his ministry, and Mr Harrower had completed his 50th year, and both of them preached with more energy than many in the prime of life. Dr Stark has managed the affairs of a large congregation with very extraordinary prudence. During the long period of his ministry, which has brought him in contact with three generations, he never had the slightest misunderstanding with the managers and elders. He has always conducted matters on principles of justice, and kindness, and firmness, so that no one could ever think of opposing him. Dissent in that place has gained not only a firm footing, but the highest respectability under his auspices. He has been emphatically a good man, and has long possessed a weight of character which very few attain. The intense interest manifested by his people

in his welfare is alike creditable to both parties. His appearances in the pulpit are welcomed as joyfully as in his former days, and his people listen to him as if they were under the impression that he speaks from the eternal world. Indeed his appearance has now much more of eternity than of time. He speaks as one who feels that he is soon to exchange the present for the unchangeable state, and seems intensely anxious that his hearers may be prepared to join him in the kingdom of the blessed. It now does the heart good, as well as the intellect, to listen to his ministrations—ministrations that are hastening to a triumphant termination.

OCTOBER 6, 1849.

[Since the above was written the subject of it has been removed to another world. He died May 2, 1850, at the same time that his assistant was removed to Glasgow.—ED.]

REV. THOMAS MAIN,

FREE CHURCH, KILMARNOCK.

THE themes of the gospel ministry are confessedly the most interesting and sublime. From them the orator and poet draw their inspiration, and even the sneering infidel meanly steals from its sacred pages the armour with which he fights inspiration. What ought, then, to be the might and mastery of his ministrations whose themes are those of the Bible ! There are found whatever stirs all the affections, and whatever commands the intellect and conscience. The preacher can take back his hearer to the antedate of time, and show him worlds starting into order and beauty at the command of the Omnipotent. Sanctioned by the same word he can carry his auditor forward to the end of time, and surround him with splendours of the great white throne and of dissolving worlds. What scenes can be brought into competition with a world drowning—Sinai smoking—angels falling—Tophet yawning, and the heavens opening ! When did fancy and imagination soar and reveal so sublimely as in the visions of the prophets and predictions of apostles ? What can move the heart like the story of Joseph, of Samuel, of Josiah, and of Timothy ? Where is domestic bliss to be found like that of Abraham, of Isaac, and of the family of Bethany ? But the preacher finds subjects that more than astonish or amuse. He can bring his auditors in contact with the invisible and eternal—he can disclose their character and relation as moral and responsible agents—he can bring heaven near in its loveliness and glories, and hell in its awfulness and terrors. He can reveal the wrath of the Omnipotent against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and

pourtray the position of those who wither under his frown. He can cause voices to come down from heaven—sweet voices uttering joy; and the wail of wrath to ascend from the depths of remediless perdition. He can do all but convince and convert, and with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven he may be instrumental in effecting even that mightiest of changes. It is, however, when the preacher takes his position near Calvary that he finds himself on the best vantage ground. The creation of worlds may amaze and astonish—the survey of Sinai in flames may terrify—heaven's music and songs may produce a pleasant sentimentalism, but the scenes of Calvary alone melt the heart and awe rebellion into obedience and love. There justice, power, and holiness, blend with pity and mercy, and there Jehovah appears as the God of love. The Scriptures display a Divine ingenuity in introducing “Christ and him crucified” to the view of the reader. Type, figure, and prophecy, are full of him, and he best discharges his duty as a Christian minister who finds Christ where he is in the Scriptures, and who presents him in the various and impressive aspects in which he is there pourtrayed. With what a power did the subject of our sketch, last Sabbath evening, preach Christ from the sublime words of the prophet Isaiah! The Stone, the tried Stone, the sure Foundation, was presented to his auditors in all the drapery of architectural figure, and with all the force of sober truth. His hearers he took not to forming or burning worlds, not to blackness and darkness and tempest, but to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood that speaketh better things than the voice of Abel. He pointed the timid and the hardened, the penitent and the unbelieving, to a Foundation broad and firm, and to a Salvation full and free. His text was, as may be learned from the above, Isaiah xxviii. 15, “Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” The preacher read the preceding and succeeding verses, which threaten judgments against the rulers of Jerusalem, and proceeded after the following manner:—

The preciousness of a gem depends not at all upon the position which it occupies; for whether it lie buried in the

depths of ocean, or be found in the cabinet of kings, its intrinsic worth is the same, but much of its beauty will depend upon its setting. The star never shines so beauteously on the mariner as when all around is enveloped in the profoundest gloom. It is the vast sterility that reigns around that imparts such a freshness to the living green that greets the eye of the weary traveller in the desert; so in like manner the language of the text is seen breaking and beaming forth from the midst of the wrath around it, like a gleam of glorious sunshine bursting forth from the darkened heavens, like the promise God gave to Adam ere yet he quitted Eden—a promise, like the text, imbosomed in a curse, like the bow God planted in the cloud, that told to Noah and his children they should never see another deluge—like as though we had heard the silver trump of jubilee issuing from amid the clouds and thick darkness that hung mantling so awfully on Sinai's summit; so breaks the language of the text, in the act of uttering one of the most appalling threatenings; in the midst of the wrath he remembers mercy, and so he breaks abruptly into one of the best and brightest of all the declarations in the sacred volume: Therefore, thus saith, &c. The text is too ample for a single discourse; but there is a threefold aspect in which it may be viewed. 1. Let us consider of what the text speaks. It is a stone that has been laid for a foundation, on which other stones may be built, and the temple of God be erected. 2. By whom was this foundation laid. You will observe, from the text, that it was none other than God himself. Not merely that there is a foundation, but, Behold it is I who have laid it. Our special attention is directed to the fact, that it was by God himself, amid the songs of the morning stars and the shouts of the sons of God; it is laid by him who laid the foundations of the earth—by him that built the palaces of eternity, and peopled them with all their glory, and replenished them with all their felicity—by him that sitteth in the circuit of the heavens, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing. Oh! Is not this fact sufficient to invest it with a sublimity, dignity, and glory, at once peculiar and divine? Does it not proclaim, 1st, The necessity there was for such a foundation? 2d, Not only the necessity but the adequacy and adaptation of this foundation?

3d, The condescension and marvellous mercy which it reveals—the unfathomable love to the children of men? When God the Father had an innumerable company of angels to select from, he had but one Son. Why did he not select Gabriel or Michael, or some one of that vast company? He made choice of his well-beloved. On Christ being a tried stone, the preacher said, Patriarchs have tried him; they saw him afar off; this was the Shepherd of the house of Israel. Prophets, apostles, and martyrs, of every age, and in every clime. Who are they before the throne?—the great multitude which look not like the natives of the sky? These songs they sing, and those palms they wave, tell of battles fought and victories won. Go and ask them how came they to those blissful seats, and they will point you to the cross. These shining robes are the uniform of the blest, washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. He has been tried in every situation—in health and in sickness, in life and in death. Infidelity has been tried, and has only handed man over to a hopeless despair; but Christianity, when has it ever been tried and found wanting? It has found men in trouble, and gave them peace and filled them with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christianity is on its march, its sublime and colossal march, to conquer the world. It has found them in darkness, and gave them light; it has found them condemned, and it gave them pardon; made the wilderness and the solitary place to blossom as the rose. It is a tried stone, and it becomes our business to set it forth, that the coming generations may build upon this sure and precious foundation.

Our space excludes the peroration.

Such are the leading features of the discourse, but the ideas were greatly extended and amplified. The text was discussed under three divisions. These again were sub-divided into particulars; a very general mode of arrangement, and when judiciously applied renders a discourse perspicuous and intelligible. If injudiciously, no arrangement is productive of such confusion—none so well calculated to render a discourse unprofitable and incomprehensible. The audience sit and hear the firstlies, secondlies, and thirdlies fall upon the ear like the chime of a clock informing them of the flight of time, and if

the mind is interested at all, it is generally to discover how much of the discourse is past and how much may yet be to come. While the preacher imagines he is clearing up everything to the satisfaction of all, he is but holding on through labyrinths of confusion which lead only to cimmerian darkness. Such is not the case with this preacher. His divisions drop naturally from the text, and succeed each other in strictly logical order. They were few, but amply sufficient; and being neither wordy nor complex, every mind could comprehend, and every memory retain, them. Though thus logically correct, the discourse was highly poetical. The preacher's mind and feelings are of that class that loves to view every thing through the medium of imagery. His text may be considered a well or spring, from which issues a clear and limpid stream, widening and deepening and sweetly gliding through fertile meadows, collecting its volume from a hundred tributaries, yet holding its way calmly and majestically, never narrowing nor shallowing, never foaming nor dashing against rugged and precipitous banks, but gliding onwards to the ocean, a wide and fertilising stream. The hearer feels as if he were contemplatively strolling along the banks of such a river, feels the bright sky above, and a lovely world around. The objects that variegate the landscape are not new—he has seen such before. Here are the fir tree and the olive tree, the rose and the lily—yet they grow in new situations, form new combinations, and are seen under new influences of light. He is charmed with all he sees and hears, and returns to his dwelling with elevated feelings, refined affections, extended knowledge, and improved judgment. Such is the impression made upon the hearer by this preacher's ministrations. His words are indeed high sounding and grand, but they carry within them ideas equally elevated, and strictly in unison with his text, rendering it clear as crystal, and sustaining its genial and vivifying heat. His introduction was fine. The idea of comparing the text to a gem set in darkness was no less appropriate than elegant. There was no doubt a great variety of figures employed to illustrate one idea, which might be termed redundancy, rhetorically considered. For instance, in referring to the time when God laid the foundation stone, he was not satis-

fied by stating that it was laid in counsels of infinite wisdom, before creation, but also ere the foundations of the earth were laid, ere a star sparkled in the sky, ere a seraph sung, &c. This is a rhetorical license which is very captivating to an audience, and when largely indulged becomes more showy than valuable. This is one of the preacher's marked peculiarities, and evidently has its source in exuberance of fancy. He himself never seems weary in wandering through the realms of imagination, and we may suppose that hearers, who are in any degree poetically constituted, will look upon this as one of his greatest charms. Though it is much to be preferred to the dry and barren common-place style of discourse, still it is well to keep it in subjection. The preacher does not require any such resorts for the purpose of spinning the discourse to a proper length, for the great fault of the sermon was its undue length. The speaker could not yield until he had exhausted not only his own strength, but also the patience of some of his hearers. There was also much fine matter in the prayers, though the opening one was too lengthy. We do not mention those things for the sake of finding fault, but simply in the hope that the preacher may be aware of their effect upon the audience, as tending to detract from much that is excellent, and rendering less effective that which is well calculated to be of great value to the cause of Christianity. The manner of the preacher was calm—much more so than usual; his voice is sufficiently powerful to tell, even in a large house, without occasioning him much bodily effort; though sharp, it is sonorous, and his words issue forth in a continuous uninterrupted stream. These qualifications, with the addition of a prepossessing personal appearance, make him well adapted for the office he holds. His brow is high, his hair and eyes dark, and his features firmly defined. From the views we had of him, he appears to bear a striking resemblance to the portraits of the poet Burns.

We know not to what extent he may have tried his strength in verse or rhyme, but certainly he has the heart of a poet, and must have sacrificed to the muses in his earlier days. He possesses a vigorous and acute mind; can see his subject in all its bearings, and has imagination and taste sufficient to work

it out in a manner agreeable to the feelings and profitable to the judgment. He evidently loves to allure, by holding forth to the sinner the bright promises of the gospel, rather than compel to obedience by the terrors of the law. It is not uncommon for very superficial preachers to select for text the most sublime passages of Scripture—passages that glow in the mind with sun-like effulgence, and impart all the beauty of Paradise to the dreary wastes of human nature; yet, for want of capacity to comprehend, and imagination to sustain, the intrinsic and suggestive beauties of these sacred gems, their efforts only tend to bury them in dull prose till they are utterly lost. But a fine text in his, and in such as his, hands, retains not only all its pristine beauty but becomes all the more valuable by being presented in a proper light, by having its virtues revealed and its uses explained.

Mr Main is, we understand, a native of Glasgow, and was there educated. He was ordained in the High Church, Kilmarnock, in 1839, and left the Established Church, along with his people, at the disruption. The church then was half empty, and in a few months it was full. When North Leith became vacant by the translation of Dr James Buchanan in August, 1840, he obtained the unanimous appointment to this charge, the second largest stipend in the Church—this was before any litigation arose about the subsequent candidates. He declined it, though his stipend was only £150 and a manse. His people presented him then with a silver tea-service, of the value of one hundred guineas, and also a purse with 108 sovereigns, as a token of their attachment. At the disruption nine-tenths of his people left with him, 400 from the Lower Church, with five elders which joined him in a body, and worshipped in the Relief Church till the Free High Church was opened in July, 1844. It seats 1200 people; 200 were unaccommodated at the opening, and were obliged to go elsewhere. It is more than let, and the seat-letter cannot supply the demand. In 1844 the Free Church of North Leith gave him another call, which he declined. When Dr Roxburgh came to Glasgow, he got a call to St John's, Dundee, which he eventually declined. He got a strong appeal against his removal, signed by all the office-bearers, about forty, and by

1032 of his people above sixteen years of age, urging him to remain. Two months ago, in the anticipation of the vacancy in the Free High Church, Paisley, he was, we understand, offered *privately* the appointment, but he at once declined. He has been on hosts of deputations both in England and Scotland, opened a great number of Free Churches, and set agoing the erection of three Free Churches in three neighbouring parishes at the disruption; and his usefulness and influence in the district were largely argued as a reason against his removal from Kilmarnock. The utmost harmony has prevailed among his office-bearers and his congregation, and if he has shown great strength of attachment to them in refusing to leave, they have manifested very strong attachment to him, having sought in every way to promote his happiness.

NOVEMBER 8, 1849.

R E V. J. B. H A M I L T O N,

LAIGH KIRK, KILMARNOCK.

THE most skilful moral alchymist can never determine the exact amount of national, domestic, and individual benefit communicated at any given time by a Divine Christianity. How far its objective aspects may influence those who never feel its subjective power on the understanding and heart it is impossible to ascertain; but there can be no doubt that its indirect and correlative power extends to all classes of society and to all quarters of the world. It may not change everything it touches into pure gold, but its operation on the mass of fallen humanity is in many cases marvellous, and in all cases mighty. The adaptation of the great *facts* of the gospel to man's intellectual and moral nature has never received sufficient attention. These facts are alike addressed to man's highest reason and his most simple perceptions. The man that can derive pleasure from the working out of a complex and difficult geometrical problem may find ten-fold more delight in following out the vast problem of human redemption, from its simplest axiomatic announcements to the completion of the mystery of God. At the same time the man of tenderest susceptibilities may find scope for the fullest flow of soul in contemplating the career of the Man of Sorrows, in his sufferings and in his triumphs. It admits of no doubt that the modifying and restraining influence of Christianity extends to thousands whose hearts never yield to its grace or their consciences to its authority. Who can tell, for example, the effects of that simple axiom on society—social and commercial—“As ye would that men would do to you, do ye also unto them.” We might speak of the re-

straints which the revelation of the future have placed on the most desperate. How many have trembled while temperance, righteousness, and judgment, have presented themselves to their awakened and guilty consciences, who never found peace in believing the tidings of reconciliation? Still it must be borne in mind that, but for living epistles of the pathos and power of the truth, this objective influence would soon cease to exist. There is nothing in this objective influence to keep itself alive. The source from which it emanates must be pure as the river of the water of life which proceeds from the throne on high. Were there no living disciples the salt of the earth would cease, and universal corruption and degeneracy would be the consequence. It is not to be concealed that much of the teaching of Christianity of the present day is barely an echo of the doctrines of prophets and of apostles. It wants the heart and soul of that pentecostal discourse, under the power of which three thousand souls—many of whom had been the most desperate characters—confessed their deeds, and professed their belief in Christ as the Saviour. The doctrines of the cross have been diluted and enfeebled. Man's dread degeneracy has been overlooked and denied, and, consequently, a less potent remedy than the blood of atonement has been proclaimed and recommended. It is, therefore, with no ordinary feelings of satisfaction that we turn attention to such a discourse as the following—a discourse which, whatever it may lack of the graces and attractions of fashionable preaching, contains the doctrines of the cross, and not a little of the unction which characterised the gospel of apostolic days. Such a discourse not only produces an immediate and direct effect, but its subjective and remote influences benefit and bless society.

The discourse, which was delivered by the subject of our sketch in our city Sabbath week, was on the text contained in Luke xxiv. 26. The words were, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” Our preacher commenced by saying, that in the preceding part of this chapter we have a conversation recorded which took place between two of Christ's disciples, and which was taken up by Christ himself. The two disciples are generally supposed to have been two of the seventy, and one of them the evangelist

Luke himself. These disciples were travelling to Emmaus, a village about eight miles distant from Jerusalem. The subject they discussed was one of no local and passing, but of universal and eternal, interest. It was on the greatest events that ever took place in our world. They spoke of the sufferings of Christ, and of his Messiahship. The subject is at the foundation of all religion, and all true morality. It is evident from the general aspect of these two disciples that they were embarrassed and perplexed. Christ asked them what manner of conversation they had as they walked and were sad. They never had a doubt regarding the life or the miracles of Jesus. That he was a prophet, mighty in word and deed before God and all the people, they had the most thorough persuasion. But they could not reconcile the sorrows and sufferings of Christ with their views of what the Saviour was to be and to do. The reports of the resurrection of Jesus had only added to their difficulties. The question was still undecided, viz., Was Jesus merely a good man, or was he the Saviour of the world? Their great mistake was abstract speculation about a matter that can only be settled by an appeal to the word of God. Their duty was to inquire, not what they supposed the Saviour should do or suffer, but about what had been written and predicted of him in the Scriptures. In the Bible alone light is found to remove such darkness. The Old Testament is full of Christ; and Jesus directed the attention of the perplexed disciples to what had been written in Moses and in the Psalms, and in the Prophets, concerning himself. He upbraids their ignorance and unbelief: O fools, and slow to believe! &c. He first removes from their minds certain impressions which made them conclude sufferings and death incompatible with Messiahship. Ought not the Christ to have suffered, and to have entered into his glory? Let us consider, then, more particularly, 1st, The necessity of the humiliation of Christ; and, 2d, The necessity of his consequent glory. These two things include all the chief incidents in our Saviour's life. All the infirmities, crosses, sorrows, and griefs, he bore for our sakes; and all the glory that redounded to him was the result of his mediatorialship. As to his humiliation, who can go through its various stages, and enter into its degradation? What was he

not called by those he came to save?—a gluttonous man, a Sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, and everything else deemed the reproach of society. He suffered in his body. He was spit upon, scourged, wounded, crucified. He suffered in his soul the contradiction of sinners against himself. He suffered from all worlds—from heaven, earth, and hell! The hidings of his Father's face was the wormwood and the gall of all his sorrows. How intense his suffering when he said, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Who can tell the ingredients in that cup from which human nature shrunk, but which he drank to the dregs? But observe, particularly, that these sufferings were necessary, for the following reasons:—They were necessary to execute or fulfil the Divine decree. No rational being acts without a purpose or end. It follows, that He who is perfect in wisdom not only acts with an end in view, but employs the most perfect means for creating that end. But Christ must suffer, in order to fulfil the declarations and prefigurations that had gone before. At sundry times and in divers manners had God spoken to the fathers by the prophets. To Christ give all the prophets witness. There was a moral necessity for the Saviour's sufferings. Man's guilt, and God's holiness rendered such an atonement indispensable. God had said that the soul that sinneth shall die, and that he would by no means clear the guilty. There is none holy as the Lord. He holds sin in supreme detestation, and it is not enough to threaten the transgressor he must take vengeance on his deeds. Distributive justice must be satisfied, and sin must be punished. As sin is an infinite evil it deserves an infinite punishment. But a punishment must be either infinite in its nature or duration. In the latter case an atonement was impossible, and therefore one who makes an atonement must be able to bear the sins of many, and to suffer its infinite demerit. God's moral character must be vindicated. He may suspend natural laws by a miracle, but moral law, being a transcript of his own image, is immutable and eternal. See, then, the evil of sin—not so much in paradise—in fallen angels—in a flood sweeping away a world of ungodly—as in Gethsemane and in the groans of Calvary. Learn here also the value of the soul, the love of Jesus, and the obligations we are under to love him in return.

On the consequent glory we cannot enter on this occasion. We merely say that it is the mediatorial glory of Christ that is meant. His essential glory as one with the Father admits of no diminution or augmentation. His mediatorial glory now shines forth, and he will reign as mediator to all eternity. The heavens shall wax old as a garment—the stars shall fade away—but the personal glory of Jesus shall know no decay. It shall continue long as the cycles of eternity.

The above is a very meagre outline of a sermon which occupied about three quarters of an hour in delivery. The preacher speaks rapidly, and his style is so much condensed that we have been obliged to make a general statement include a number of his particulars. The discourse is historical and argumentative. It is one of those that necessarily demand more matter than can be well included in the compass of a discourse, but it is also one of a class which when they cease to be preached pulpit ministrations will be lifeless and ineffective. Those who compare it with the discourses of apostles will find that it bears no remote resemblance. It is necessary to state that it is such a discourse that very few indeed can do full justice to the delivery. It is not a cold outline of a system of theology, else the phlegmatic preacher who delivers by the eye might lay it before an audience—it is one of those discourses, pregnant alike with thought and feeling, which a cold preacher destroys, and which the merely energetic cannot sustain. If delivered at all well the characteristic of the symbol must be logic on fire. To such a preacher as the subject of our sketch the grand views it contains of the method of atonement and acceptance are congenial subjects, and the fire and fervour with which such views should ever be associated are not wanting. But the great difficulty is to sustain the voice and manner at a proper and natural pitch. When the very first sentence plunges into the love and compassion of Christ, where is there room for the gathering climax? and when the whole discourse is an argument, where is there play for fancy or room for illustration? The discourse was complete, but the delivery was necessarily heavy and symptomatic of severe effort. As we have said, the sermons contains the foundations of Christianity. Doctrines and

precepts must be taught, but facts are still more important, and still more commanding. Never yet was a man converted by an argument however forcible, but the facts of Christ crucified and Christ glorified have melted the hardest heart. But besides the mere teaching of these facts it is to be specially observed that they were so taught not as to appear abstractions, but the goal towards which all previous revelations of the Bible tended, and to which all consequent additions reverted. Prophecy, type, and sacrifice, were shown to be mere illustrations and popularisers of these facts. Such a mode of treating it delivers Christianity from that littleness with which petty doctrinalists invest it. It appears stretching through all time—embracing all the sympathies of the universe—and affecting the destiny of man, and, indirectly, all created intelligence. Nay, more—it appears as the subject of Divine contemplation and effort, and the consummation of Jehovah's purposes in the creation and preservation of all worlds. On these grounds we pronounce the discourse one of those grand conservators of Christianity—a centre of influence which radiates widely and tends to correct and restrain those whom it may not be able to subdue or sanctify.

Mr Hamilton uses no notes, nor does he generally need them. Sometimes, indeed, he hesitates, but the hesitancy is not the lack of matter, but from a conflict of words, and the conflict embarrasses him not. His style is clear, terse, and strong. His sentences are often clusters of strong thought neatly arranged. His discourses betray great strength and vigour of mind, and the same thing may besaid of his prayers. On the occasion in question, for instance, in praying for the sick he also prayed for the physicians as God's servants, and that the means and medicines they prescribed might be blessed. Again, in praying for the bereaved, he pleaded that they might vividly realise the fact that their dead would live—that their dew would be as the dew of herbs, and the earth would cast forth her dead. Such expressions give individuality and interest to what otherwise becomes dull and commonplace. At times the impetuosity and force of his manner recalls the memory of one who was long a master in Israel, the lamented Dr Russell of Dundee. The only thing we would suggest is a little more leisure at

times both in preaching and praying. He appears some times in too great haste. His appearance is commanding. Kilmarnock clergymen seem to be largely endowed with a presence. This is the third we have sketched, any one of whom might pass for an English bishop in possession of £20,000 a-year, rather than as a poor, Presbyterian, working clergyman.

Mr Hamilton appears to be about 45 years of age. He was educated, we understand, at the High School in this city, and thereafter entered the University, where he enjoyed the friendship of Robert Pollok, then writing his well-known poem "The Course of Time," Previous to holding his present charge, in which he succeeded the Rev. Mr Strong, now of Dailly, he was stationed at Clontibret, in the Presbytery of Belfast, and at a still earlier period he officiated in the Chapel of East at Blantyre. He was ordained in 1836, and has been in Kilmarnock about five years. No clergyman gives more attention to private visitation than Mr Hamilton; and the circumstances in which he is placed, and his personal qualifications, are extremely well adapted for the proper performance of a duty which is too often discharged in the most perfunctory manner. Holding a collegiate charge, he has more time at his disposal than most of his brethren. In the earlier part of his career he, for some time, studied for the medical profession, and has, consequently, nothing of that dread of infectious disease which is apt to stand in the way of unprofessional men, not to speak of the positive assistance which he may thus have it in his power to bestow in cases of emergency.

AUGUST 4, 1849.

REV. JOHN STEEDMAN,

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, STIRLING.

IN former sketches we have referred to localities in Stirling venerable on account of their antiquity, and memorable on account of the transactions of which they were the scene. We now come to a spot which we have long deemed holy ground —the spot where the chief founder of the United Secession Church lived and laboured, and where one of the chief religious bodies of Scotland may be said to have commenced its existence. The United Secession Church, now known as the United Presbyterian Church, is a name known throughout the world, and universally and favourably known in Scotland, and as we are about to present a sketch of one who, in the office of the ministry, succeeded (though not immediately) Ebenezer Erskine, and who ministers on the very spot, or within a few yards of it, where he ministered.—On Sabbath the subject of our sketch preached in the forenoon from 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10—13, which contains an account of Manasseh's repentance. The discourse threw no discredit on the place where Ebenezer Erskine ministered, nor on him who ministers to the children and children's children of his congregation. It was a discourse remarkable for the clearness and conciseness of its outline. Though the text consisted of several verses, the divisions that included their scope were few, only two, and they were expressed in a very few words. The subdivisions were equally felicitous. Four particulars included and exhausted the characteristics of Manasseh's career of crime, and the two subdivisions, the means and the evidence of his repentance and acceptance, were equally happy. But it is often easier to map a neat outline

than to properly fill it up. Often, indeed, the neatness of outline stands for no other purpose than to rebuke and condemn clumsy and diffuse illustrations. In this case the outline was only exceeded in neatness by the filling up in vigour and power. The preacher showed that the mapping, instead of being a mechanical effort, was the result of an elaborate analysis. He had evidently considered the life of Manasseh in all its phases, and from that study elicited his discourse. On the first part of his subject the preacher gave ample evidence of his historic and descriptive powers. Like all true historians, he was exceedingly particular about his facts, gathering them from express declarations and obvious inferences of the sacred page. He was careful to make his character neither better nor worse than delineated by the pen of inspiration. All he did was to combine in a description the facts that the sacred writer had scattered, in following out a wider design than an individual history. The selection and grouping of his facts were done with great skill, and his description as a whole was complete, graphic, and impressive. Never was there a character more complete in all the elements of passive and active rebellion. But just when the preacher had finished his picture—a picture so hideous that hell from beneath seemed moved to receive it—he very beautifully exhibited the abundant mercy of God. He traced the dealing of God with this rebel till he was bound a captive of Babylon, and with superlative felicity remarked that “this man was born there.” And then how satisfactorily did he demonstrate the evidence of the great change that passed on Manasseh, and how mighty in interest were the lessons he deduced from his history! Doctrine has been said to be the drawing of the bow, and application the hitting of the mark, and in this case both displayed the skill and the strength of one who discharges his duty as a good soldier.

The attentive hearer could not but be struck with the carefulness of the whole discourse. The introduction stated the general principles of the dispensation of mercy, and the discourse was one of its most brilliant illustrations. It was, however, more than holding up a picture to amuse—it was so held up as to alarm the impenitent and to encourage the be-

liever. It was well calculated to lead the transgressor to penitence, and the believer to gratitude. The illustrations were worthy of the sublime theme. The preacher, properly, quoted largely from Scripture, and the quotations coalesced with his own elegant and vigorous sentences. We have seldom been more satisfied that we were hearing not what cost the preacher nothing, but what cost him effort to study and much labour to finish. There was evidently much more than general preparation. Every illustration was as closely studied as was the general outline. This thorough preparation may be partly owing to the fact, that the preacher being in a collegiate charge, has to preach but once, and who would not rather hear one such thoroughly prepared discourse, than half a dozen of the vapid and vague generalities that the *universal* preacher produces. Those placed over this congregation evidently delight to be in their study as well as to delight the great congregation. It is easy to distinguish between empty verbiage and such expressions as formed the staple article of such discourses. For instance, many would, in speaking of the ineffectualness of God's speaking to Manasseh, have given us long details of the natural hardness of the human heart, but our preacher told us briefly and beautifully that the rock may be splintered and not softened—that the ice may be broken and not melted. There is more thought and force in these expressions than in whole discourses designed to illustrate the rebelliousness of man.

It deserves special notice, that the careful preparation we have mentioned was so perfect as to supersede the use of notes. We doubt whether the preacher had notes before him; but, at all events, his eye never rested on them. Nor did his memory at all betray him. There was once or twice a slight verbal hesitancy, but no embarrassment. The preacher appeared like one who was in full possession of his ideas, and words were shortly forthcoming. He is one of the few preachers that need no notes in the pulpit, and the reason is because he must use them freely in his study. There is much feeling as well as intellect in his preaching. He spoke not of the apostacy and peril of Manasseh as one would speak of an insoluble problem—he spoke as one conscious that the redemption of the

soul is overwhelmingly precious. With what satisfaction did he eye the captive penitent, when it was said of him as was said of an almost equal scapegrace, "behold he prayeth!" And then with what pathos did he urge the rebel to return to God and obtain his mercy! In addition to the intelligence and thorough preparation and Christian feeling manifested in this discourse, the theology was of a healthful and encouraging character. The preacher, while he concealed nothing of the heinousness of Manasseh's sin, showed clearly the righteousness as well as the grace of God in his acceptance. The Divine purpose he exhibited in perfect consistency with human freedom, and the grace of Christ with the sinner's obedience.

The manner of the preacher is good. He is of the calm, dignified, philosophical school, of which a distinguished preacher in Glasgow is the best representative. To those who delight in the hurricane and tumult, he appears at first cold, formal, and systematic. As he proceeds from the didactic to the pathetic, the seeming coldness disappears, and the eye that looked on him with indifference sheds the tear, and the heart that was cold begins to warm. His enunciation is slow, distinct, and measured, and his pronunciation strongly marked with a provincial dialect. His gestures are graceful, and occasionally animated, and his style as we have said, is terse, vigorous, and generally elegant. His prayers on the occasion in question were very good, and his reading of the Psalm unexceptionable. The great congregation—the greatest in Stirling—were attentive and devout, and the whole service was worthy of the place where Ebenezer lifted up his voice and taught the people spiritual independence and saving knowledge.

Mr Steedman was born in Milnathort, in the parish of Orwell, and after receiving the usual elements of education at the subscription school of the village, he studied at the University of Edinburgh. In March 1841, he was licensed as a preacher by the United Associate Presbytery of Dunfermline; and in November of that year, he received an unanimous call from the United Associate Congregation of Craigdour, in Aberdeenshire, one of the largest and most influential United Presbyterian Congregations in the north. In February, 1842, he received a unanimous call from the only Secession Congrega-

tion in Belfast. In June of the same year, he received a harmonious call from Stirling; and having accepted it, he was ordained in the month of August.

The pastors of the congregation have been Ebenezer Erskine; then his nephew James Erskine—he was a short while a colleague with his uncle—but was only nine years in the ministry when he died. The congregation then fell into a very divided state—and was seven years vacant, after which Mr Robert Campbell, a preacher of extraordinary popularity, was ordained pastor. He was thought by many a preacher of greater power than Mr Erskine. Some years after he was ordained the late Dr Smart was settled as his colleague. They lived together fourteen years, when Mr Campbell died. In two years and a half Mr David Stewart was ordained as colleague to Dr Smart. Their collegiate life existed about thirty-nine years. Dr Smart lived for three years after Mr Steedman's ordination. There were three clergymen in charge of this congregation for three years. Dr Smart only preached some three or four times after Mr Steedman's ordination. He was a noble man and minister. Even after he had been upwards of forty years in Stirling, no minister of whatever fame, would have filled the church better than himself. 1225 signed Dr Smart's call. After his ordination, the "Old Light Controversy" began, and the split in which it issued reduced the congregation. At no period of its history, from the days of Erskine down to the present time, has it ever done so much for missionary and benevolent purposes as at present.

JULY 7, 1849.

REV. WM. CUNNINGHAM, D.D.,

PRINCIPAL OF FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

As the world of mind is allowed to contain as much variety and diversity as the world of matter, we may adopt the solid, the liquid, and the aeriform, as emblematical of three orders of mind. The aeriform may represent the fanciful and the imaginative—the liquid, that class who, from rude materials, make “their speech distil as the dew,” and the solid, the hard headed, plodding, and argumentative. Now and then a person appears who possesses, to a very considerable extent, all these qualities; but, in general, nature’s gifts are dealt out with a more sparing hand. There *was* in the Free Church one who combined the solid with the imaginative—one who could, from the rudest materials, pour forth a flood of impassioned oratory; but now, and it is no disparagement to say so, these gifts are divided among several of the most eminent in that church, or indeed in any other church. Without at present naming the men representing the two first classes, we may state that the subject of our sketch admirably represents the other, or the substantial class. Varying the figure, if we contemplate the Free Church as a system, the subject of our sketch is the centre and sun of that system, both by official position, and, in many respects, in character. Volume, steadiness, illumination, centralisation, characterise his mind and his position. Smaller and more brilliant bodies roll around; but all acknowledge his influence, and all confess his sway. The meteoric department, which seems as if ruled by its own laws, still bows to those laws which subjugate all to one complete whole. Last Sabbath morning, in our city, those who had long felt his influence repaired to

Free St David's, that they might see this guiding central star. Shortly after the announced hour, a person of large dimensions and lymphatic temperament, and of grave mein and slow step, ascended the pulpit stairs. The first glance a stranger got of him, as he appeared in the pulpit, was certainly but little calculated to excite expectation. Buried in a gown to the chin, and covered with an immense supply of hair to the eyes, small was the portion of his countenance which was revealed ; and a considerable portion of that small surface was covered with a pair of huge spectacles. By and by the large form moved, and a voice was heard much more sharp and quick than the pallid countenance predicted. A Psalm was read distinctly and emphatically, but the form continued almost motionless. A prayer, most important and weighty in its matter, was offered, but still all activity was absent on the part of the speaker. The words were weighty, but much needed to be winged to enable them to reach the sky. Yet words of vast import issued from the still form. Man's desperate depravity, Christ's glory and vicarious sufferings, and the personality and energy of the Spirit were the themes ; while sanctification of the whole soul, by the blood of atonement, applied by the Spirit, was supplicated. And yet the manner was drowsy. The body sympathised not with the mind—fire from heaven had not seemingly fallen on the offering, while it lay on the altar a goodly sacrifice. At length the text was read—a text sufficient to lift up the heaviest hands, and throw on the countenance a heavenly radiance. The text was, Heb. xiii 5, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." On reading the words the preacher partially revealed that well-developed forehead which till now had been concealed beneath a mass of hair as vulgar as if it had never covered the brow of talent. The leaden countenance began to beam, and instead of the feeble voice formerly heard, we had winged words issuing in rapid succession, and thrilling throughout the edifice. The preacher having removed his gloves, and partially thrown aside the hair from his brow (for who ever preached well in gloves ?) began to say that the chapter from which the text is taken is filled with practical precepts and cheering encouragements and consolations to the Hebrews. The text directs to the true source of action and

comfort—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

The discourse was excellent and characteristic. It contained much important truth, and also revealed not a few of the leading characteristics of the preacher's mind. It was full of facts, strongly and lucidly stated. The preacher's mode of stating common truths greatly augments their importance. Thus, for instance, in speaking of Christ's humanity, he said he appeared on earth as a man like ourselves. The last words, "like ourselves," make the fact tell of a warm relationship. But besides stating his facts vividly and forcibly, they are all placed on a substantial philosophical foundation. They are on a broad and solid substratum of thought, which connects and combines the whole so as to render them subservient to some one object. Thus his first discourse became a complete whole, illustrative of the unchangeableness and permanency of the person, character, and work of Christ. But it is to be specially observed, that the discourse contains facts, and facts alone. There is not a single analogy or illustration in it, from beginning to end; and the same thing is true of the afternoon's discourse. Had some of his popular colleagues in the leadership of the church been discussing such a text, we would have the first general division of a discourse on this text illustrated with certain phenomena in nature that are transitory, and certain that are durable; but our preacher stuck to the statement of facts, and shut his eyes and ears against all the analogies and illustrations which a vivid fancy would have conjured. This matter-of-fact mental calibre has given him all his influence in the church. Dr Candlish and others have thrown the charms of an illustrative genius around the constitution and doings of the Free Church. Dr Cunningham, as a wise master builder, has brought together large masses of materials, which others have polished and adorned; and which will remain a monument of the enterprise, the energy, and the taste of combined and co-operative talent and invincible purpose. When we say that Drs Cunningham and Candlish are of very different orders of mind, we do not mean anything disparaging to either, nor do we even institute a comparison. Dr Candlish is a pulpit orator in the best sense of the term, and probably that forbids his emi-

nence in other departments. One or two instances have occurred in which various orders of greatness have been combined—as, for instance, in the late Dr Chalmers, formerly mentioned, who was almost equally great in the pulpit, the professor's chair, and the press; but gifts are not thus lavishly conferred unless on rare or remote occasions. Most of even our eminent men have to be content with shining in one department; and it is no disparagement to the eminent leaders of the Free Church when we say that since their great head (Chalmers) was taken away, no universal genius illumines that church. It takes several of the best of them to fill up the blank his departure caused. The one cannot say to the other, I have no need of thee. Though the subject of our sketch has never enjoyed a very distinguished pulpit celebrity, he is not, on that account, the less indispensable to the Free Church. Though his strong philosophical mind is not of the popular order, it is essential to give stability and direction to such a movement as that of the Free Church. His vast stores of history—sacred and profane—his great skill in constructing an argument or a system—his indomitable perseverance, energy, and firmness, render him well qualified to fill the central position he occupies. Returning to our analogy, he remains firm, and seemingly immovable, while all around is movement and activity. Clouds and darkness may surround him—circumstances may obstruct his action and influence—but every part of the system feels he is at the centre; and few and daring are the orbs that would rebel against his control. He will never give wings to thoughts, but he will combine and arrange them. He will never dazzle with the splendour of creative, nor even of illustrative genius; but he will command respect by the energy of his mind, by the strength of his will, by the depth of his philosophy, and by the rectitude of his purpose.

But the healthfulness and attractiveness of his theological views demand special notice. In his present very influential position a gloomy system of theology would spread a disastrous influence over the ministrations of the Free Church; and were he one of the latitudinarians of the day, who are wondrously wise and lucid in their views, he would soon destroy the ortho-

doxy of the church. But it so happens that his theology is more scriptural than either Calvinistic or Arminian. Dr Cunningham calls no man the father of his theology. He cautiously headed the second part of his discourse in this manner, "Jesus is the same in his love to our guilty race, and desire of their salvation." The follower of Calvin would have said, "Jesus is the same in his love to the elect world, and in his desire for the salvation of his own people." The Arminian would have said, "Jesus is the same in his love to every individual of the race, and uses equal means for the salvation of all." The former is faulty in stating a part for the whole, the latter is faulty in stating what is palpably untrue: (*is the same* means used with the North American Indians as with us ?) whereas Dr Cunningham's view is unexceptionable, because it is as near as may be the *ipissima verba* of Scripture and altogether its sentiment.

The same scripturalness ran through all the discourse. In concluding the statement of his several particulars he preached the gospel to all. He showed the aspect the gospel presents to all men, as well as the special consolations it offers to believers. We were particularly struck with the manner in which he stated the depravity and desperate wickedness of the human heart. A class of new theologians have sprung up, who make men all right by making them simply believe some abstract fact. They heal the hurt of the people slightly; but our preacher exposes sin in all "its exceeding sinfulness," and then proclaims the all-sufficiency of the gospel remedy. Indeed, when professors and preachers speak of human nature as more misfortunate than wicked, and of salvation only as the belief of a few facts, the gospel ceases to be preached, and man ceases to believe. Strong delusions are received, and the church and the world are confounded. Well may the Free Church now rejoice, that he who sits at the helm of it is one not spoiled through philosophy, and yet he is a philosopher—not unsound in theology, and yet familiar with all false systems—not a novice, but one who proves all things, and holds fast what is good.

Yet with all his greatness he has his faults. We did not see the propriety of his going through his introductory ser-

vices as if he had been asleep. We like to see a preacher in earnest in reading and praying, as well as in preaching. Nor do we think he did wisely in the matter of American slavery. His philosophy failed to show him the connection between slave driving and slave dollars—between slave owners and soul destroyers.

The character of the worthy Doctor's phrenological development is involved in a mystery that defies all visual sharpness to penetrate. His brow does not appear remarkable for its breadth, for a little way above the visual organs at least, but it vanishes into a most stupendous dome of—of—we do not know rightly how to term it, for there is nothing in kind between it and what is called, in this country, hair. It more resembles a mass of blacky-brown cotton or wool, and what course the cranium pursues through it, or whether it extends to the height of six or twelve inches above eyes and ears, is all conjecture. His features are prominent, and, in fashionable phrase, finely chiselled, but beneath such a natural (if it be really natural) helmet, they appear somewhat diminutive. His voice is distinct, but neither deep nor powerful, and indicates that he is a snuff taker, and consequently has not the full advantage of its natural sounding board. He is tall and massive, without being fleshy, and the swing of his long arms, when they are set in motion, is peculiarly effective in his platform efforts.

We are quite aware that the leaders of great popular movements are interesting to all parties, whether friends or foes; but the nature of that interest is very different. Each interested party views them through a medium, which has the effect of distorting their real resemblance or proportions; and what appears to the one an angel, may appear to the other a demon. The one party gazes and admires with feelings approaching idolatry; while the other is excited to feelings of hatred or contempt. What memories more honoured by Protestants than Luther, Calvin, and Knox? and what memories so much hated and despised than theirs among the adherents of the Pope? While the one party regards these great men as the instruments under Providence that separated light from darkness—that tore asunder the veil of ignorance, cruelty,

and superstition, which had for ages hung between the earth and heaven ; the other regards them as the emissaries of Satan, who perverted the true faith—the propagators of heresy and the framers of a lie. This spirit to a greater or less degree pervades all parties whose interests or ideas run counter to each other, whether in business, politics, religion, or anything else. Undoubtedly this ought not to be, but it is—it is human nature—and, consequently, will exist as long as humanity itself. The subject of our present sketch commands too conspicuous a position in his sect, and has been too active in its momentous movements, to escape this distortion. His own party regard him as superlatively great, while there are others who hold considerably modified opinions. Be these as they may, his name will be handed down to posterity along with Chalmers, Candlish, Gordon, Guthrie, Buchanan, and others, as one of the fathers of the Free Church of Scotland. We remember him at the first sittings of the Free Assembly in Canonmills. Of course Dr Chalmers was the central luminary there as elsewhere ; but there were also other luminaries, though not so large, which nevertheless shone with no borrowed light. There was Dr Candlish, restless and subtle, not contented with what was already achieved, but prying into futurity ; anticipating rocks and quicksands in their course, and pointing out the means by which they could be avoided. Again, there was Dr Guthrie, launching showers of sarcastic javelins of sharp and glittering steel into the camp of the opposing army. There were also lesser men who contented themselves with empty boasting of the noble stand *they* had made ; and having more enthusiasm than discernment, imagined they had conquered when the struggle was just begun ; but there was also Dr Cunningham, sufficiently calm in the midst of the excitement to see clearly the true position of affairs, and talent enough to point it out in such a manner as to prevent those intensely enthusiastic from evaporating or effervesing on the spot. We then regarded him as a shrewd, earnest, clear-headed man, without enthusiasm, or at least possessing the power of keeping it subordinate to his judgment. Since then we have not seen him until Sabbath last. Thought and exertion have done far more than the time that had elapsed, in robbing his countenance of its smooth and

youthful appearance, by deepening indentations, dimming the eyes, and pervading all with a care-worn aspect.

Dr Cunningham was a considerable time one of the city clergymen of Edinburgh before the Disruption, and came out with the first at the famous Assembly of 1843. He now occupies the prominent position of Principal of the Free Church College, Edinburgh. Besides being Principal, he is Librarian, and one of the Professors of Divinity. We understand he is much loved by the students, and looked up to by the other professors. The qualities we have mentioned fit him eminently for such a position.

FEBRUARY 16, 1850.

REV. JOHN WILSON, M.A., D.D.

STIRLING.

THOUGH no ecclesiastical ceremonial can render persons or places absolutely holy, circumstances may confer on them a profound sacredness, and invest them with a temporary or permanent interest. The ground on which we tread may be reckoned sacred from transactions connected with individual or national history. Man looks with interest towards the place of his birth—the scene of his sufferings—or the plafform of his triumphs. But man, as a social being, extends the sphere of his observation to places connected with events that have affected his fellows. He can throw himself back into the past, and hold high converse with those stirring events which affected the destinies of men who have commenced the years of eternity. He treads lightly on the dust of the mighty dead, because their memory is held in remembrance and their resurrection in anticipation. To the intelligent mind no place is more sacred than our hoary cathedrals, which political and religious events, as well as the hand of time, have consecrated and invested with an imperishable grandeur; and among all these old erections there is scarcely one more remarkable than the place where he ministers whose name heads this sketch. How varied and how different have been the feelings and affections cherished and strengthened within its sacred precincts! Time was when Dominicans and Black Friars nestled there, like birds of ill omen to the neighbourhood. A superstitious people ingloriously yielded to their dictation, and were corrupted by their precepts and example. Thousands of immortal beings looked up to them as their instructors, and venerated them and

the place to their souls' hurt. The light of the Reformation at last dawned, and discovered the abominations perpetrated there. The thunders of John Knox were heard, and the ill-omened birds were scared away. The house corrupted by superstition was swept and garnished, and the ministers of a purer faith taught the people knowledge. The people that sat in darkness saw a great light. The shadows of a long night fled away and the morning of a glorious day dawned, and there was great joy among the people. Meaningless rituals were superseded by spiritual worship, and the gospel of the kingdom was preached with power and success. But though John Knox took order for the observance of a purer worship, several important ecclesiastical questions were left for other reformers to settle. Men that feared God universally respected the doctrines taught within these ancient walls, but certain matters of discipline caused dispute. One of the Erskines made a spot in the neighbourhood the scene of his labours, and many of the worshippers in the cathedral (now known as the East and West Churches of Stirling) rallied around his standard and adopted what they considered a more scriptural mode of appointing ministers. A third change still remained. The questions that divided the worshippers in Erskines' time again came up in another form. The remaining worshippers in that sacred building were again divided, and the majority forsook the place where their fathers worshipped, and where they had often taken sweet council and walked to the house of God in company. The gospel of the Reformation is still preached in the sacred edifice, but ecclesiastical questions have divided the population into many sections, so that this sacred house is frequented by only a fragment of the people. No one doubts that the gospel of Knox and of his fellow reformers is preached there, but the people will now choose their own ministers and determine their own ecclesiastics. What extremes have met in this place! Once the population yielded an unquestioning obedience to the dictates of an ignorant priesthood. Now they refuse to attend the place where a pure gospel is preached, because of legislative dictation. They respect the preachers as men of God, but they repudiate the system that places them there without their consent. We say nothing for or against

this revulsion of feeling, as this is not the place, but we mention the fact that the place once venerated and even worshipped, has been deserted by many, lest the rights of conscience should be invaded. We wish to state the fact strongly, that the people of Stirling and similar towns have often no objections to the preachers or the preaching in such places as we mention—on the contrary, they respect the ministers as “men who watch for souls;” but they have seen and heard so much of ecclesiastical despotism and state dictation in affairs of religion, that they take the liberty of choosing their own ministers and appointing their own rituals. Their ministers preach the same doctrines, conform to the same standards, but they claim spiritual independence, and repudiate state control. These remarks will go to show that in such a place it were supremely unjust to argue against the excellence or superiority of a clergyman because his hearers may be few. There are in Stirling, we are informed, not more than from six to seven hundred communicants in all the three churches connected with the Establishment, and these could, of course, be easily accommodated in any one of the places of worship. It follows, then, that each must be thinly attended. Besides this statistical reason of their attendance, there are local reasons why the East and West Churches of Stirling are but thinly filled. The North Church is much more conveniently situated and comfortably constructed, and the transference of the Rev. Mr Beith shortly before the Disruption to the North Church almost emptied the former, and time will be required to again enlarge the congregation. These circumstances we state to prevent a stranger drawing unfair conclusions from the comparative smallness of the East Church congregation. The principles on which these sketches are conducted are such as to give every clergyman of every denomination full advantage of his circumstances favourable or unfavourable, and treat him not as a minister of a sect, but, irrespective of sect, on his individual merits. The subject of our sketch, though matters over which he has no immediate control have meantime supplied him with but a scanty congregation, preaches the doctrines which, we are glad to say, are in the ascendancy in Stirling. The following outline will show that he preaches

the gospel of the apostles, and that Christ, and him crucified are his themes.

Last Sabbath afternoon he preached from Exodus xxxiii. 14, 15—"If thy presence," &c. The preacher began by saying, Who can, by searching, find out God? who can find out the Almighty to perfection? He is higher than heaven, what can we know? deeper than hell, what can we do? Behold God is great, and we know him not. Yet he is universally present. God is in heaven and in earth, and in every place. Within us and without us, we may witness the energy of his power. He guides the movements of the planetary system, and the fall of a sparrow. The ravens receive their meat from God. He leads men to the green pastures beside the still waters; or into a parched land not inhabited. He is the witness, ruler, and judge of all. He brings light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. Though we can determine nothing from man's condition here, there is a system of retribution still, and hereafter God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness. He is the moral governor and judge of the world. Such are the relations he sustains to all men; but there are special relations in which he stands to the Church purchased with his blood. He sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel. They are in Christ Jesus, who came to save them. He was the light to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel. We shall consider, 1st, The manifestations of the Divine presence made under the Mosaic dispensation; 2d, The manifestations made under the Christian; and, 3d, The blessings connected with the Divine presence. These ideas were carefully illustrated at some length, and the discourse was over at 20 minutes past three, having occupied 35 minutes.

The introduction to the discourse was scriptural, appropriate, and beautiful. The preacher first described the character of God and his relations to his intelligent offspring in general, and then to his redeemed family in particular. The divisions were natural and well expressed. The manifestations God made of himself to his ancient people, and the disclosures he makes under the ministration of the Spirit, were correctly pointed out, and the accompanying and appropriate blessings were scripturally stated. The preacher speaks rapidly, and is

imperfectly heard by a stranger ; but the illustrations were full of Scripture, accurately and appropriately quoted. We are, not, however, left to an occasional discourse in forming our opinions either of the matter or style of the subject of our sketch. He has published extensively on various subjects of great and general importance. From these works, as well as from his pulpit ministrations, we gather the following characteristics of our preacher. His mind is constructive and vigorous rather than analytical. In his various works he generally selects materials of ready access, and out of these he constructs an argument of great exactness and strength. It has been said, for instance, of his greatest work, the Reasonableness of Christianity, that it defies extract. This is the more remarkable when it is considered that the volume contains both principles and precepts tersely stated. These, however, if severed from their connection, lose much of their force. The material scattered is common ; but after it has been collected and constructed, it is imposing, and even beautiful. There are many can say more striking or startling things, but few can combine their thoughts into such elegant forms. This constructive power is alike visible whether the material is of his own or of another's preparation. In the introduction to the discourse of which we have given a rapid outline, this peculiarity was most apparent. He selected and arranged a few passages of Scripture so as to not only homologate with, but also to cast much light on the subject under discussion. This constructiveness is necessarily connected with taste. He who can design a beautiful erection must have a natural taste for perfect forms ; and the more perfect the taste the less will depend on the nature of the materials. The architect of taste will be able so to arrange and combine the rudest materials as to form a structure of great beauty. As the pieces lie scattered they may be uninteresting, and even unsightly ; but at his touch they come together and assume form and symmetry and beauty. And so is it in literature as well as in physics. Give such a one as the subject of our sketch materials of any kind, and he will construct an edifice well proportioned and beautiful. He may not possess that force of mind which can detach the stone from the rock ; but let the stone be ever so rude, he will make it fit

well in an erection of unquestionable symmetry. Besides this constructive power, the attentive reader cannot but observe a certain polish and finish in his writings and discourses. The style is as neat as the argument is complete. The taste is as pure as the logic is unassailable. In his preface to the work alluded to, he quotes largely from Dr Wardlaw, the purity and elegance of whose style has commanded so much admiration ; and it is probably the highest praise we can give to the style of the subject of our sketch, when we say that the quotations coalesce with that author's without repugnance. Our preacher mentions that he discovered a similarity between some of the sentiments and arguments of the author in question and his own. Without endeavouring to establish any general analogy between the mind or writings of the two, there can be no doubt but their views on many important philosophical and theological questions, are very similar. Both state very clearly the chief points in their discussion, and both quote Scripture largely and unexceptionably in support of their views. The liberality of sentiment of the subject of our sketch, has long commanded general admiration. It deserves special notice that he manifested this liberality of view at a time when not a few of the clergymen of the National Church looked on Dissenters with no friendly eye—when dissenting clergymen were considered dangerous in their principles and inferior in their official status, even then did Dr Wilson show them the deference and respect due to equality of rank and of labour. Dissenters always esteemed him as highly as did the members of his own denomination. When other clergymen of the Established Church preached and prayed against Dissenters, he prayed for their prosperity and co-operated with them in their benevolent and religious enterprises. When they prayed for the National Church as “the Church,” he prayed for the “section of the Church” with which he was connected. When they were praying for sectional ascendency, he prayed for the spread of scriptural truth. As a consequence he was a clergyman greatly and generally beloved, and for the reason, that the people are generally before the priesthood in discerning the signs of the times. Other clergymen became liberal when they could not avoid it, or when the pressure from without

compelled ; but he moved with the stream of public opinion in liberality of view, and left his compeers in the rear. This catholicity of sentiment invested him with an influence which but few could boast. Young and old, churchmen, and dissenters, hung on his lips. His place of worship was the resort of the fashion as well as of the piety and intelligence of the place, and it was not till ecclesiastical questions divided the population that his audience was less crowded. His pulpit appearances are spoken of as being dignified and energetic, and displayed much earnest desire and ardent feeling. He exercised a potent sway both over the intellect and affections of his audience, and was the means of great and lasting good to the people of Irvine. In these days of antagonistic sectionalism it is refreshing to hear the people of Irvine of all denominations speak of the subject of our sketch. There is not only the entire absence of every ill feeling but the warmest expressions of the tenderest regards. For many years he was very anxious in assisting young students in the prosecution of their studies, and many of them attended early in the morning to get lessons from him.

While he retains all the energy and evangelical savour of earlier days, there is now a great drawback in the enunciation of the speaker. Occasionally he employs artificial arrangements to aid his distinctness ; but on the occasion in question these were absent, and a stranger had some difficulty in hearing some of the words. As he speaks rapidly, the slightest dental effect greatly impairs his delivery, and renders it painful to ascertain the meaning. Were he to speak much slower, this defect would soon disappear. There is a great contrast, certainly, between the crowded congregations to which he ministered in Irvine and his present congregation in point of numbers ; but that should stimulate rather than discourage. Some of the greatest men the world has seen preached but to a few, and had the mortification to see their hearers grow small by degrees. Our preacher came to a deserted church, and has already a respectable beginning, and were his talents and worth understood, and did he render himself a little more audible, no doubt many would soon attend his ministrations. He is one who has given proof that his heart

is in his work, and however much his present position may seem a sinecure, the fault is in the system, and not in the preacher.

The subject of our sketch is the son of the late Rev. Dr Wilson, minister of Falkirk, the author, among other works, of the History of Egypt, in 3 volumes. His son, of whom we now write, has been an ordained minister for thirty-seven years, as we learn from the Almanac. His first charge was that of St Andrew's Chapel, North Shields, and we are enabled to say, on testimony to which we give ample credit, that his ministrations in that place were blessed of God by the most extraordinary success. He returned to Scotland in the year 1820, and continued from that time till 1844 as minister of Irvine, when the savour of his name and preaching, as we have already said, was widely and deeply felt. His congregation there was one of the largest in Scotland.

Among his own flock he is much esteemed and beloved, and amidst much ecclesiastical warfare we know that to Dr Wilson no bitterness of feeling has ever existed. He is well known in the church to be not only of highly gentlemanly manners and varied accomplishments, but in particular as having made great attainments in classical literature, to which he has always devoted much of his time and attention. The list of his works is long. All of them have been favourably received by the public, and several of them highly commended. Of late years Dr Wilson has laboured under all the disadvantages of delicate health.

JUNE 30, 1849.

REV. WILLIAM ALEXANDER,

FREE CHURCH, DUNTOCHER.

We may be allowed to compare the whole mass of preachers to a forest composed of trees, of all species and of all shapes. We have the sapling, graceful and flexible, and easily bent in any direction. We have also the matured tree, firmly rooted—presenting an unyielding stem, and bidding defiance to the warring elements. We have also the veteran tree, deprived of its vigour, and telling of many winters and summers, many pleasant gleams and rude blasts, yet venerable in decay, and all the more dear to the heart the nearer it approaches its end. As one tree gradually sinks another gradually rises, and thus the beauty, vigour, and general aspect of the whole are constantly kept up. Yet to whatever class they belong, each has something peculiar to itself, which renders it more or less interesting. Nor does the admiration given to one render others less valuable or pleasing. We admire the willow for the graceful curvatures of its stem and branches and the pensive sweetness of its drooping leaves. Again, we admire the oak for qualities the very opposite. It grasps the earth with tortuous and powerful talons—shoots up its sturdy trunk, and abruptly throws off its gnarled limbs in all directions, twisting and bending and ramifying, and taking their own wayward course in the most ungentle and fearless manner. The former is emblematic of that class whose every word seems dictated by kindness and compassion, whose every sentence is a sentiment of love, and whose every movement is in accordance with the sweetness of humility. The latter is emblematic of another class to whom nature has given a smaller share of her pleasing

and amiable gifts than of those stern qualities which will not allow them to bend from the commandments. Love, mercy, and pity, are in their estimation things they have little to do with. Those that do well receive their approbation, and those that do ill they regard as deserving of no pity. We mean, then, to class the subject of our present sketch with the oaks. On Sabbath evening he appeared in the United Presbyterian Church, Bridgeton, and, after praise and prayer, gave out for text, 1st Cor. iii. 11, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus."

He commenced by saying that the great object of the Scriptures is to set forth the Lord Jesus Christ, and for this end much use is made of figures. If we carefully study them they will be of great value in enabling us to form a correct estimate of His mediatorial character. Sometimes Christ is set forth as a hiding place—to signify that he shelters from the wrath to come. Again, he is represented as rivers of water—being vivifying and refreshing to the souls of his people. Again, he is spoken of as a captain—he trains them to endure hardness, as good soldiers, and leads them on to victory. Again, he is called a physician—he cures his people. He is called a shepherd, and every tender lamb brought into his flock he watches with unwearied care, and at the close of the day of life he will lead them to the heavenly fold. He is also represented as a head—he is the life of his people, the life of their faith, hope, and love. And in the text, he is set forth as a foundation, and it is only by trusting in, and building on, him, that men can be saved. "For other foundation can no man lay," &c. The doctrine contained in the text is that Christ is the only foundation on which men can build for eternity; and, first, I shall advert to some false foundations on which sinners build for eternity. Every man is building for eternity on some foundation, either false or true. Few there are who build on Christ. By far the greater number build on some false foundation, and, of course, are insecure. The building may look well among men, but the blast of death and the tempest of judgment shall sweep it away. I shall state, first, "the uncovenanted mercy of God," because I believe it to be the foundation on which sinners most frequently build for eternity.

The Lord is merciful (say they), and he will take pity on us and forgive us our sins, and will not consign us to destruction. But when men speak thus, they know not what they say nor whereof they affirm. If God dealt out wrath to the fallen angels, what right have you to expect that you will not also be turned into hell? You deserve only God's wrath and curse. God is as holy, just, and true, as he is merciful; and these would combine to destroy you. The mercy on which such build has no reference to Christ's atonement. Mercy, in their estimation, is only an unrestrained license to sin. O how sinners delude themselves! God is merciful to the believer in Christ, but not to such. No! he cannot be merciful to them whose rejoicing it is to go on in sin—he will visit them in his wrath. He is a holy, righteous, and terrible God, who will not clear the guilty. Let such take warning from the text. 2d. Another false foundation on which sinners build is, their own righteousness. 3d. Another false foundation is, that Christ died for all men. 4th. Another false foundation on which many build is—if elected they will be saved. (These ideas were illustrated at considerable length.) Second, I will endeavour to point out the character of those who build on Christ Jesus. They are but few who build on Christ, and the reason is, that Christ seems to the eye of the natural man to be rather a stumbling-block than a foundation—a rock of offence, than a ground of hope. He is all-glorious to saints, but sinners see in him no beauty that he should be desired. Is not this the carpenter's son—whose father we know? &c.—and thus they despise him. Yet there are some who take him as their foundation:—1st, They that build on the sure foundation know Christ; 2d, They who take Christ as their foundation love Christ; 3d, They that build on this foundation have confidence in Christ. No wise builder will begin unless he has confidence in his foundation, and so have they that build on Christ. 4th, They that build on this foundation are they that are ready to part with all for Christ. I mean literally what I say—no metaphor. Observe the conduct of Paul when about to go to Jerusalem. When the brethren endeavoured to persuade him not to go, and began to weep, mark his answer—“What! mean ye to weep and to

break my heart? I am ready, perfectly ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem," &c. So I say that those who build on this foundation are ready to part with all for Christ. The gain of Christ is the loss of the world. If ye possess Christ ye possess not the world. If your inheritance is on earth you have none in heaven. There are some kings who will allow none of their subjects to hold property in any other kingdom, and so is it with Christ. Christ, and he alone, must be their treasure—their portion—they must be satisfied with him alone; and, being satisfied with him, they are prepared to part with all for his sake. "Good master, what shall I do to be saved?" "Go and sell all that thou hast," was the reply. "Lo," said Peter, "we have left all and followed thee." And though Christ's people have not actually left their worldly possessions, still—if need be—they hold themselves in readiness to forsake all—father and mother, sister and brother, houses and lands, and so must all who build on Christ. If any here are not ready to do this they build on a false foundation. So it is wise to count the cost, for unless you forsake all you cannot be his disciples, and if, after you have begun to build, you give over, men will mock you by saying, "This man began to build, but was not able to finish." Are you ready then, when need be, to part with all—health, wealth, property, and life, for Christ? He parted with his life for his people, and would not think their love worth having who would not part with their life for him.

It will be apparent, even from this outline, that the sermon had been carefully studied in all its parts. We have, first, the general plan of procedure distinctly laid down, and the details following in regular and systematic order. Each successive division springs from and is compared or contrasted with the preceding, so as to keep the entire bearing of the text constantly before the minds of the audience. So far, then, as construction is concerned the discourse was of great merit. It was ample, methodical, and so clear, that all could follow the preacher distinctly, and carry away with them a correct impression of his leading ideas. Nor were the details less perspicuous. The sentences were short, abrupt, and often suggested much more than was expressed. The ideas were new, in form at least. It

was evident that the preacher had carefully analysed the materials out of which he constructed them, cast them into the crucible, and moulded them into forms of his own. He is one that cannot only think for himself, but think vigorously. He does not wander far in search of beautiful and rare materials, but seizes with a bold and somewhat rude grasp whatever comes within reach, and applies it to his purpose with popular skill. Nor is he at all timorous in expressing his ideas, and his statements admit of no appeal. He seems to look upon the Scriptures as a code of laws with concomitant rewards and punishments expressly set down, and being an exponent of these laws, he will bend neither to the right nor left. He treats the law categorically rather than circumstantially. He does not say, "I view the law in this light," "My opinion is this or that," but "I tell you this is the law, and you have no right to question it." His tribunal is not that of a civil court, but a court-martial. The criminal is brought forth, the crime is stated in a very few words, sentence is pronounced, and immediately after the volley is heard that sets all to rest. He is a rigid disciplinarian—allows no escape—shows no mercy—but metes out the full measure of the law to all those who obey not the gospel. According to his views, we have a very limited number of Christians, either lay or clerical.

Like some preachers of celebrity, of the same denomination, Mr Alexander's ministrations show few oratorical graces. He is not, as the term is generally understood, a fluent speaker, yet he speaks with much animation. The very bluntness of his utterance, and the somewhat awkward style of his gestures, command attention. He is evidently not a member of the anti-snuff association, and this circumstance in no way improves his voice. The giving up of this practice would certainly be no great sacrifice in one whose views are so austere; yet it would be something in favour of the cause of Christianity, as it would make his pulpit labours more agreeable to his hearers. In person he is above the ordinary stature, and of spare habit. He has a well-developed forehead, forcibly exhibited by the large masses of black hair which swell out to a considerable extent on either side. His complexion is pale, with an expression of features which indicates much firmness—I-care-not-

what-the-world-says expression. His appearance in the pulpit is commanding, and were he ambitious to make a little stir in the world he might easily make himself the leader of an host eager to believe and act in accordance with his will.

Mr Alexander occasionally appears before the world in print. His published sermons are characterised by the same peculiarities as that we have just been commenting on—the same vigorous, go-a-head, knock-down style. In one published by him in the year 1841, when the anti-voluntary crusade was in its zenith, we find him a sturdy defender of the kirk. As a specimen of his manner of dealing with an opponent, we extract the following, in which the voluntary principle is assailed:—“And in the upholding of the Christian tenet, she hath of late maintained a glorious struggle—having overcome all her opponents, and driven them triumphantly from the field of battle. And now the opposite principle—the principle commonly called the voluntary principle—the principle that rulers and legislators as such have no business with Christ, this principle, I say, about a year or two ago fell sick and died a natural death. Its shroud was put on, its coffin was made, its grave was dug, its funeral dirge was sung; and now nothing remains of it in our land but simply its monument, having this inscription, ‘Here lie the mortal remains of the voluntary principle—the principle, namely, that Christ has no business with the state, and the state no business with Christ.’ And God in his mercy grant that it may never again hold up its deformed head, but may sleep in the grave of everlasting oblivion, to rise no more till the general resurrection; when if it do rise, it shall rise only to be dragged forth to judgment—to be found guilty, and to be condemned with the devil and his angels.” It will no doubt appear to many somewhat strange that he himself became a disciple of this terrible monster, or something, at least, practically, very like it. But the best of men have occasionally modified their views; and Mr Alexander, in this respect, is only like many others. A little farther on we find him stating:—“Moreover, in speaking as I have done, you are not to suppose that I wish to impress you with the idea that our church is a perfect church. No; a perfect church she is not; and if any man think that he ought

to dissent from her communion because she is not perfect, then he would need to go to heaven, for there, and there alone is the perfect church to be found." Mr A. has dissented from her, and has not yet gone to heaven, and we trust will yet remain many years even in an imperfect church on earth. Regarding patronage he says—"Patronage of late years has been weakened, hath been wounded ; and year after year it is waxing feebler and feebler. It is not a plant, and no man *dare say* that it is a plant, of our heavenly Father's planting, and therefore soon must it go the way of all living. And though even now it be making a desperate struggle for its existence, still that is just what might be expected : for even as monsters make stronger efforts before they die than they can do when they are in full health, so the monster patronage is at this moment, in prospect of its dissolution, striving with all its might to avert its fate and to recover former absolute sway and unlimited and uncontrolled dominion. But its striving is in vain, for there are in our church a noble band of faithful and goodly men who under God have doomed it to destruction ; and when once its last breath had been drawn, then shall the church of our fathers rejoice and be glad—yea she shall clap her hands and sing aloud for joy." This extract shows that there is some danger in these latter days in attempting the character of a prophet. He mistook an instance of temporary excitement for a death struggle, for the "monster" not only lives but appears constitutionally as robust as the kirk itself.

This bold dashing style awakens attention, and often does good. It indicates a strong honest conviction on the part of the speaker, and if it occasionally produces seeming anomolies it also arouses thought and challenges investigation.

Mr Alexander is a native of Fowlis Easter, in the Carse of Gowrie. He was educated at the University of St Andrew's, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Dundee. He was assistant to Mr Macnaughtan, late of the High Church of Paisley, for nearly a year. From Paisley he was translated to Duntocher, where he has been about twelve years ministering to his present charge, within and without the Establishment.

REV. JOHN EDMOND,

DENNYLOANHEAD.

IT is to be regretted that the Christian minister's text book forms so frequently a contrast with his instructions. That text book is full of God, but the lessons from it are full of man. The Bible teems with facts, the teachings with theory. The former is full of variety, the latter of sameness. The Scriptures are characterised for vivacity, the sermon for dulness. They sparkle with the most dazzling imagery, sermons are loaded with dry, doctrinal discussions, seldom relieved with a solitary figure. The Bible brings God near to man, as the God of creation and providence, as well as the Author of salvation; but many preach as if the Author of salvation bore no relation to external nature, and had no control over the visible universe. The Bible, moreover, teaches the sublimest facts in the simplest form; the preacher loads the simplest fact with empty verbiage. The Scriptures challenge competition for elegance and beauty; many sermons, for clumsiness and slovenliness. How often are the most brilliant passages selected as the subject of discourses remarkable only for their tediousness and forbidding coldness! If a fact is chosen it is only to obtain a place in a favourite theory, and if a figure is selected it is speedily buried among cumbrous and unprofitable doctrines. Even those who can do justice to a plain statement of the Bible often break down when they approach the rich drapery in which the Scriptures present the most important truths. They may speak of wisdom, power, and holiness, as doctrines in the abstract; but that wisdom they cannot disclose in the visible creation; that power has no expression in

the surrounding universe, and that holiness is only seen in the distance as something unapproachable and incommunicable. Such can speak of Christ as a Divine being, as the man Christ Jesus, or as the Judge of the world; but nine-tenths said of him in Scripture is meaningless, because presented in figures which they are too dull to appreciate or too indolent to contemplate. The Bible makes creation vocal of Christ. In it the heavens declare his glory, the firmament his handy work. In the tempest and storm it makes his voice, "Peace, be still!" be heard. In the calm and in the sunshine he is nigh. In the fields and by the running brooks he still whispers, in accents of kindness. Every object of beauty and of utility is made to speak of him who came into the world to save. Every relation of life is rendered sacred by his holy life in Judea, and even death itself is divested of its terrors, because the Bible makes him near. Among the few preachers who fairly attempt to make the entire revelation of God the subject of their ministrations he unquestionably obtains a place who is the subject of our present sketch. If he selects a fact, such as the resurrection of Christ, none can reason with more cogency and clearness; if he selects a doctrine he presents it, not so much as the part of some human system of faith, as the teaching of the word of God; and if he chooses a figurative text, instead of reducing it to facts he sustains the figure throughout his discourse, and makes his illustrations bear some resemblance to the subject of discussion. At present he is delivering a course of lectures on Christ's Character and Titles, under a somewhat novel arrangement. He selects his text alphabetically, taking each letter in order, and that letter commences the word expressive of the aspect in which Christ is to be presented. His last lecture, for instance, happened to be on the letter D, and he chose for his text "Dayspring," from the first chapter of Luke—"Through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us." Most preachers would have satisfied their ingenuity by making such a text a motto, but not so this preacher. He discusses it and every other figure, however sublime, in a textual manner, and in this case at least the discourse scarcely fell below the majesty and beauty of the figure. He had four leading ideas, and each of

these was expressed by a word beginning with the letter D. It is to be particularly observed that there was no talk of the significant letter. It was never even mentioned as the letter of the evening, but the auditors, being aware of the order, at once recognised it, and it certainly did considerably aid the memory. At all events we now write from memory, and weeks have elapsed since we heard the discourse. On the Dayspring, he said :—1st, Christ's coming dispels the soul's ignorance ; 2d, Destroys the soul's corruption; 3d, Drives away the soul's sorrows; 4th, Directs the soul's energies. On the first head, the dissipation of the darkness of night, the preacher showed that darkness, in Scripture, is the frequent emblem of ignorance; indeed the terms are interchangeable and synonymous. He then drew a very striking analogy between the effects of the dawn of the day in the natural world and the dawn of the Dayspring in the human soul. Of course he first decided the question that the “Dayspring from on high” is the Saviour, giving strong reasons in favour of his decision. He then presented a most striking picture of the children of the night and of darkness. He admitted that they were not in total darkness, but had some glimmerings of natural light. The light of conscience—the candle of the Lord—remained still, but dimly. The pale orbs of science and philosophy shed some light on their dreary path. As natural night has its moon and stars so also has the night of natural ignorance the glimmerings of conscience—the reflection of the Sun of righteousness. As natural night has its artificial lights so also the night of spiritual death. In night, however, the nature, the relation, the proportions and beauty of objects are not seen, nor do the children of the night and of darkness form any conception of the nature, proportion, and beauty of spiritual objects. The preacher here, in very neat and eloquent language, depicted the sorrows of the spiritual night, and showed how all its shadows and sorrows flee away before the rising of the glorious Sun. He spoke of nature philosophically and scientifically as well as popularly. Science, in his hand, served the noblest of purposes. It was more than the handmaid of religion—it was auxiliary in revealing the glories of Him whom sun and stars, plants and flowers, at once obey and

emblem. Such a mode of teaching has more than mere textuality to recommend it. The Saviour himself thus taught. The crowds that surrounded him began to learn the beauties of the flowers and grass of the field, which to them had hitherto been meaningless. He taught them that his Father in heaven clothes the lily in its beautiful hues as well as makes the sun to rise. The heavens above and the earth under their feet became full of sights and sounds redolent of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator. Nor are the multitudes now any more than then insensible to the charms of such teaching. We compare not any human teacher with Him who spoke as no other did, we would merely speak of the characteristics of his teaching, when we say that the more faithfully any teacher imitates his mode of teaching the more successful as well as the more popular will he be. The preaching of the subject of our sketch has already awakened a very palpable interest in that locality. On the evening of these lectures, which are the chief exemplifications of the manner of teaching we refer to, the whole country side appears to be moved, and no one seems to think the Sabbath desecrated by the conveyances of all sorts employed in carrying people from neighbouring towns to attend these lectures. The spectacle is one but too seldom seen. Most country sides are undisturbed by the manifestations of ministerial talent and ingenuity. They who ought to have their imagination fired and their hearts warmed by the magnificence and loveliness of natural scenery are often stupid as their domestic animals and dull as the authors of systematic divinity.

The occasion on which the lecture, of which we have given the outline, was on a Sabbath evening—a Sabbath evening in the country. Shortly after six o'clock the noise of carts, gigs, and carriages of every possible sort gave warning of the hour of evening service. A more interesting spectacle than the gathering of a country evening congregation is scarcely conceivable. Young and old from all quarters are seen moving to the place of the holy. The better sorts drive in conveyances of all kinds, from a cart upwards to a carriage. On this occasion some dozen conveyances arrived from Falkirk, Denny, and other neighbouring towns. At the hour of meet-

ing the church was comfortably filled, and gas being unknown in that place, some dozens of candles illuminated the house with "a dim religious light." It is evident that our preacher possesses an excellent memory. Though his evening discourse, as we have seen, was of the most difficult order to sustain, he had no notes, and seldom indeed did he give any symptom of hesitation. It is to be specially observed that there was no loose declamation such as any popular orator can produce on the spur of the moment, but the composition was most concise and elegant. Throughout all his divisions and subdivisions he steered his way with unhesitating certainty and full confidence—recalling, and probably creating the elegant drapery of an ambitious and elegant diction. His taste, too, is evidently unexceptionable. It is well known that there is but a step between the sublime and the ridiculous, but our preacher sustained a uniform high excellence, without for once merging into anything of objectionable taste. His figures were lofty, but pure, and often magnificent. He knows how far to carry out a figure, and where to stop. His fancy, vivid and varied as it is, pays due deference to truth. It was alike free of extravagance as it was of mixture. The natural scenery was presented as such, while moral and spiritual phenomena retained their ethereal character. It is evident, moreover, that figurative subjects are congenial to his mind. He can explain and reason as well as others, but he can illustrate and enforce still better. His judgment may not be more unerring or profound than that of the majority of preachers, but his fancy and taste and manner are greatly superior. He may not equal his respected senior in office for administrative wisdom—for a keen knowledge of men and manners—for a discriminating shrewdness, and for an unoffending firmness; but he will be superior for brilliancy and versatility of talent—as an unwearied persevering student, and as a popular and impressive orator. He may not at the celebration of his jubilee services (and may he live to enjoy them) be able to look back on half a century without a quarrel with any of his people or a single evil wisher in the country, but he will be able, we have no doubt, to review a bright and brighter career, and a grateful and intelligent people around him. The senior pastor's progress has

been as that of the shining light—shining more and more till it now approaches perfect day. His will be that of the blazing comet, not wandering in unknown and untrodden regions, but in clear and intelligible paths which comparatively few are able to tread. His will be a bright and burning career in the higher walks of a sublime theology.

Mr Edmond is a native of the parish of Balfron, and was brought up under the Rev. Mr Thomson, Holm-of-Balfron, the Secession minister of that church, which is one of the oldest congregations in the body. He was afterwards educated in Glasgow. He was ordained as assistant and successor to the Rev. Dr Stark in 1845, and has ministered there with much acceptance since. He looks much older than he is—for he is still quite a young man—his hair having almost all fallen off. His features are small and regular and his countenance pleasant. Several attempts have been made to remove him to our city, but he sticks, seemingly resolutely, to his present charge, though his income is by no means so large as it would be in Glasgow. Still one can scarcely wish to remove him from a sphere of labour where he is so acceptable and useful. Mr Edmond is very much respected in Dennyloanhead, and few young preachers have attained so wide popularity. When he preaches in Glasgow crowds flock to hear him, and all are delighted with the ease and elegance of his manner and the excellence of his matter. Despite his attachment to his present congregation, we cannot see how he can refuse the repeated invitations of the East Regent Place Church, as the prosperity, if not the existence, of the congregation depends on his acceptance. There can be no doubt but, were he in Glasgow, that church would soon be as well filled as it was in the best days of the lamented Dr Heugh. The attachment between this congregation and Mr Edmond is of long standing—dating as far back as Dr Heugh's time, and subsequent events have only strengthened that attachment.

OCTOBER 27, 1849.

[Since the above was written he has been removed to East Regent Place Church, Glasgow, and his stated and occasional labours are exceedingly popular.—ED.]

REV. ANDREW BROWNE, B.A.,

IRVINE.

AN intelligent traveller carries with him sources of enjoyment to which the ignorant is a stranger. In sweeping along the Ayrshire line the ill-informed man sees nothing but a succession of heights and hollows—green fields and shining lakes—deserts and villages—sunshine and shower. The person whose mind is stored with his country's annals, and whose heart is moved and melted by the fair things and the lovely of nature and literature and science, enjoys a second sight. As he approaches, for instance, the “ancient burgh” of Irvine associations, literary, historical, poetical, and religious press on his attention. He sees more than the watch fires which gleam at every coal pit; he hears more than the screech of the sea birds beyond the ponderous sand bank. Scenes brighter than the landscape glistening in the sun present themselves to his fancy, and influences more subtle and certain than the winged lightning attract his notice. He nears the place where ethereal genius has flashed out to illumine the world, and where sanctified genius arose to shed a lustre over the song and minstrelsy of Scotland and of Europe. To begin with the less lustrous orbs which there arose, Galt, is seen with keen glance penetrating the secrets of society and revealing them to the world. Burns for a considerable time dwelt there, and from him the scintillations of genius flashed forth. But the man who has written immortality on every part of his native town, and whose sweet lines have cheered its every dwelling, and many besides, is James Montgomery the Christian philosopher and poet. The place where these stars appeared is unattractive

enough to the eye which sees nothing but the palpable and material. The dwelling which gave Mr M. birth has not even the honour of occupying a front row in the unambitious street—it is reached by a lane, and it is occupied with the unpoetical furniture of looms and their accompaniments, but that same dwelling was the cradle of genius, and from it has emanated an influence felt wherever the English language is known, and which begins to circulate in many tongues. The fact that Irvine is the birth place of James Montgomery invests the town with imperishable grandeur. In its neighbourhood dwells one of the oldest and truly noble families of Scotland—a family the present representatives of which reflect honour on nobility and on man, and it is something that Irvine is honoured with such patronage, and is located near such excellence. In Irvine itself there dwell not a few of the excellent of the earth. Its magistrates and ministers confer dignity on their office, and many of its humbler dwellers occupy a high place in the scale of religious and moral worth. But while we honourably mention these they must take a low place when James Montgomery is named. They better the town—he has thrown over it the spell of genius, and hallowed it with his immortal strains. They do much to dignify and sweeten domestic life—he has taught thousands of families their duty and their dignity as heirs of God, and aided them to utter the “soul’s sincere desire.” Who can calculate the power which during a long lifetime he has exerted over the minds and morals and religion of his country? At this moment his hymns are sung on the burning plains of India and on Greenland’s icy mountains. “Earth rolls his rapturous hosannahs round.” He has done much to link men of different tongues and climes together, and to link them all to God. The cords of love have been stretched forth from his humble home till they have bound together a large portion of man in holy concord and feeling and comfort. “These bands of a man” present themselves to the minds of the devout as they visit the spot where our greatest religious poet first drew breath, and commenced a career which has so deeply and beneficially influenced the history of man. Such feelings were heightened on Sabbath last by a visit to the Parish Church of Irvine. We know not whether

and death by sin—that by man came death—that by one man's offence many were made sinners. Let us consider the penalty of that covenant God made with our first parents. This the preacher illustrated at length and with great force. The discourse occupied about forty minutes.

The forenoon's discourse was of a practical character. The subject was indecision in religion, and the text selected was used as a motto. We have frequently stated that though there are probably no well-grounded objections against such an occasional use of a text, it is certainly desirable that its primary allusion should first be stated. On this occasion the preacher said nothing whatever of the original reference of the text. Neither did he say whether he used it in its primary or in an accommodated sense, but proceeded at once to found on it, or to attach to it, the subject of religious indecision. The discourse, then, was not textual; but, nevertheless, it was divided and subdivided so as to comprehend the subject in all its bearings. The nature, prevalence, causes, and consequences of religious indecision were the leading divisions, and were at once logically and philosophically arranged. The first, or the nature of indecision, was popularly illustrated, but its objective aspects were more prominently treated than its subjective principles. Undecided conduct was exposed, while little was said of an undecided state of heart, of feeling, and principle. The causes of indecision were not so happy as they might have been. The generic causes are the absence of the love of God, union with Christ, and the indwelling of the Spirit. The causes mentioned were special, and might have been multiplied to any extent. Pride, ignorance, sloth, moral cowardice, and love of the world, have their effect in deterring men; but so also have their opposites. Affected humility, assumed superiority of knowledge, bravado, &c., operate so as to prevent decision. But though the discourse might be assailed in some particulars, it was, nevertheless, one calculated to be very useful. Fidelity, earnestness, and unction, amply compensated for minor defects in the outline. Many of the preacher's statements were most important, and couched in eloquent and popular phraseology. The afternoon's discourse was greatly superior in point of completeness, vigour, and accuracy of

thought and expression. The introduction was an admirable specimen of pulpit eloquence. It was apt, eloquent, philosophical, and suggestive. It appeared, from the discourse, that the preacher has had several discourses on the Adamic covenant, and that the discourse in question was one of the series. After the doom of man, or the two-fold death, had been described in graphic and highlyeloquent language, had he, before closing, given his audience a glimpse of the path of life, the termination might have been still more impressive and useful. The discourses were, all in all, greatly above an average of pulpit ministrations, both in matter and delivery, and the congregation accustomed to such honest, faithful, and vigorous preaching has much to answer for.

Mr Browne is one of the most fluent preachers of his time. The discourses, of which we have given an outline, were delivered without the aid of notes. The preacher leans forward over the Bible, and keeps his eye on his audience, while he pours forth from the ample stores of a well-furnished mind a flood of impassioned oratory. If he hesitates it is not for lack of words, but on account of a conflict of them. Of language he has such a command that the difficulty is not in finding words to express his ideas, but in selecting the best of various combinations which are all offering their services. Sometimes, indeed, there is a tendency to diffuseness, which the use of notes might restrain, but the preacher is one of the few who probably would be more hindered than helped by using a manuscript. His mind is evidently highly imaginative and poetical. Common ideas thrown into his mind assume new and beautiful forms. Thoughts which would fall from the lips of dull preachers in leaden monotony proceed from him sparkling and radiant. Whether he possesses that subtle intuition which penetrates the recondite and abstruse, and reveals their relations and character—whether he has patience for a lengthened and searching analysis—whether he has grasp of mind to master the philosophical and profound—whether he can conduct an argument with mathematical skill and certainty, the above discourses offered no opportunity of determining. They did prove, however, that the mind of the preacher is versatile and energetic—that his imagination is rich

and vivid—that he has a fancy which delights to revel in the regions of the beautiful, and which invests, in the most gorgeous drapery, every subject which it touches. His manner is still superior to his matter. He possesses apparently a great amount of self-possession and confidence. His action is graceful, animated, and completely natural. When he commences his body remains for a time in comparative inaction ; but as he proceeds he stands more erect, and raises first his right hand, and, by and by, both give expression to the urgency and pathos of his appeals. His personal appearance is attractive, and favourable to oratorical display. He is tall, and thin, and has a fresh and youthful appearance. His voice is sharp and clear, and quite audible throughout the large edifice. The only question regarding it is whether the large house has not induced him to pitch it on a key somewhat higher than that which he could employ with best effect. There is, however, almost no appearance of straining of it, and it is often highly musical and pleasant. His pronunciation is, on the whole, correct, and his style is popular, nervous, and pure. As an attractive preacher he has few equals. In the three fields of labour which he has already prosecuted he speedily acquired extensive favour among all classes. Many not belonging to the Established Church anxiously improve every opportunity of listening to his eloquent discourses. It is saying much in his favour that the family of Eglinton Castle, though of a different creed, generally avail themselves of his ministrations ; and many of less name of other sects may be seen seated here and there among his auditors. On the occasions mentioned his first prayer appeared to us formal and cold, but the one before the afternoon discourse was all that could be desired. It was evangelical and devout, and a deep earnestness and unction characterised it.

Mr Browne, we understand, is a native of Glasgow, and there prosecuted his classical studies. He attended the gown classes in our University, and took the degree of B.A. He studied theology in Edinburgh. In 1841 he was licensed by the Presbytery of Hamilton, and became assistant in Kilmarnock. In 1843 he was presented to the Parliamentary Church, Newton-on-Ayr, and was there exceedingly popular. In October, 1844, he was presented by the Earl of Eglinton to his present charge;

but the people of Newton-on-Ayr objecting to the translation, the case was ultimately appealed to the Synod, against the Presbytery of Ayr, which decreed he should remain in Ayr. The appeal was ultimately departed from ; but it was not till January, 1845, that he was inducted into his present charge. In Irvine, as in other places, he is very much admired as a preacher ; and though there are more churches in Irvine than in most towns of the same population, he has a very large congregation. On Sabbath last there would be from 1000 to 1200 people present. The church is very large ; and during the earlier part of the ministry of Dr Wilson, now of Stirling, it was well filled. Comparatively few left at the disruption ; and yet there are two Free Churches in Irvine.

MARCH 16, 1860.

REV. JAMES MUNRO,

FREE CHURCH, RUTHERGLEN.

THERE is a maxim prevalent in society, which emanated from, or at least was vivified and sent forth to the world by, Thomas Carlyle, as being a great atoning principle for unconscious error, namely, "Be earnest." If this test be applied to the Free Church she will be found in all respects worthy—so worthy that even Carlyle himself could scarcely find in her one single sham. During the seven years of her existence she has well nigh doubled the Church of Scotland—that is, she has built a church, a school, and a manse, in almost every parish; and if she be not legally the Church of Scotland, she is the Church of Scotland freed from the leading strings of the State, and is the greatest instance of the efficiency of voluntaryism that can possibly be adduced. Her career has been very different from that of other offshoots from the Kirk. They had to creep from small beginnings to their various degrees of importance by slow and gradual progress, like the human body from infancy to maturity—but she, like the first pair, was of full stature as soon as she came into existence. She had her score of synods, and fourscore presbyteries, and her missionaries in various quarters of the globe; and, what was of equal importance, she had the means to set the whole machinery agoing. By the energy of her ministers and members she has succeeded not only in supporting her dignity, but also in consolidating her scheme, so that she cannot easily be shaken. The Quoad Sacra defeat did not occasion her even temporary embarrassment—for no sooner was the result known than hands were at work; and as soon as stones and lime can be fashioned

into churches, the loss will be supplied by an equal number in all respects superior to the old. She will thus, through all coming time, be an eminent example of what can be accomplished by earnestness and well-directed energy. It is true—and thanks to the enlightenment of the age—she has had few difficulties to encounter in the way of persecution. There have been no faggots, no bayonets, no fleeing to the mountains nor hiding in caves for conscience' sake. She differed in opinion from the powers that be; but these powers respected her right, and she has been allowed to work her way in peace and security, none daring to make her afraid.

On Sabbath last the new Free Church of Rutherglen was thrown open for public worship. The original place of meeting was one of the Quoad Sacra churches, but, being deprived of it, the one we have mentioned has since been erected; and under these circumstances the forenoon discourse was preached. In the afternoon the pastor, whose name is given above, appeared in the pulpit, and gave out as the subject for praise part of the 122d Psalm. This being concluded, a suitable prayer was offered, and, after a portion of Scripture was read and a second Psalm sung, the preacher announced his text, Psalm cii. 16, "When the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory." The introductory remarks had reference to the literal meaning of the text—that the Zion here spoken of was the Church; this was proven by various passages of Scripture, and then he proceeded with the illustration under the three following heads:—1st, The building here spoken of; 2d, The builder; 3d, The manifestation of himself according to his word. These particulars were illustrated at length.

The text was chosen with a view to this particular occasion; and, as was to be expected, was practical throughout. Its predominating features were the elucidation of the real character of a church, and the resemblance that exists between the literal and spiritual Zion. Such an occasion might have furnished some ministers with an opportunity to say many fine and sweet things in regard to the beautiful erections, liberality, efficiency, &c., of the Free Church, which might have proved gratifying to the congregation, but the preacher seemed to have no intention to flatter. He took advantage of the circumstance to

point out the real nature of Christianity as consisting not in churches, nor in party distinctions, but in a Divine principle operating on the mind of each individual. Towards this end the text was appropriate. Many of the parallels between the literal and spiritual Zion were striking, and applied to individuals in a manner that could not fail to produce salutary effects. The preacher is one of a class to be found more particularly in the Free Church, who seem to disregard the graces of speech and elocution—who appear to despise their learning, and are attractive by the familiarity of their manner, by abruptness, and by strong practical observations. This gives the appearance of originality to their ideas, even when these ideas are common. Scholastic refinement, when it becomes general, becomes also monotonous. Dr Johnson's well known simile in regard to Pope—"A level lawn shaven by the scythe, and smoothed by the roller"—could not apply in their case, nor, in fact, would it to the most popular and most talented literature of the present day. The days have passed when authors were measured by the beauty of their sentences; and what are now chiefly regarded are the ideas they contain. A level and richly-cultivated country, partitioned into fields and parks, is highly attractive at first view to the traveller, but he soon gets tired, and longs for a sight of rude, unadorned nature. And there can be but little doubt that, for similar reasons, many an original thinker has a small and drowsy audience. In making these remarks we do not mean to undervalue in the smallest the class under consideration. They are generally persons of great natural ability; and the fact that they can present the truths of the gospel to their hearers in an attractive light is the best proof that can be given of the force of their intellect. But to return to the subject of our sketch. His personal appearance is good. The large forehead, rising high above spare and firmly-set features, and expanding till its form is lost in an extensive mass of curling brown locks, is peculiarly suggestive of the orator, and of superior intellect, and excites the expectation of the audience to a high pitch; but when he begins to speak expectations take a different direction. His voice is low and apparently feeble, while the features work and twist as if the speaker was making strong internal efforts to make himself

audible, and he proceeds a considerable way before there is indication of much to communicate, or physical power to render it effective. His manner and matter gradually improve. A degree of timidity, which at first is observable, vanishes—he moves about from side to side—his words become more measured and distinct, and at length he is all animation. Nor is this animation mere physical energy—it is the animation of the feelings. If he speaks of love, affection and tenderness beam from his countenance and vibrate in his tones ; if he tenders counsel he does it firmly and earnestly ; if he reproves, his eyes glare, his voice is raised to a high pitch, and his countenance assumes a severe and stern aspect. His transitions from one extreme to another are rapid, and often violent. Now he bursts almost into a shout, and immediately after his tones are so low and his utterance so rapid that it is with some difficulty the hearer can follow him distinctly. This is the most faulty phase of his manner, for although it keeps the eyes directed towards him, the current of his ideas are often disturbed, and, consequently, what is gained on the one hand is lost on the other. Nor can we say that his manner is entirely free, from an appearance at least, of something like affectation. We do not say that it is affectation, but the impression made on the hearer's mind is of such a nature, and tends to deprive, to some degree, the discourse of that sacred dignity which ought to pervade all pulpit prelections. There are also occasional expressions which are more striking than dignified—for instance, “God will burn up your title deeds.” However these defects are but slight, and can easily be excused when accompanied, as they are, with so much that is excellent. Many brilliant passages of sterling value were interspersed throughout, which spoke not only of superior mind, but also of ardent poetical sympathy with the grand and beautiful in external nature. Such were expressed in a few words—but they were burning words, lighting up long vistas for the mind to wander in ; and what is more important than all, an unusual degree of earnestness for the spiritual welfare of mankind seemed to be the basis both of the defects and beauties of the discourse. His manner occasions him much bodily exertion of a peculiarly exhausting nature ; and, for his own sake, he ought to subdue it a little.

The church as indicated above was opened on Sabbath. The Rev. Dr Begg, of Newington, preached in the forenoon ; the Rev. Mr Munro, in the afternoon ; and the Rev. Dr Miller, of Glasgow, in the evening. The attendance at the earlier diets was about a thousand, and in the evening fully eleven hundred. The collection, which is to assist in defraying the expense of the edifice and of the adjacent manse, was liberal, amounting to £172, to which was added a gold chain, valued at from £8 to £10. Our readers are aware that Rutherglen congregation was under the necessity of erecting a new place of worship, in consequence of the late decision in the Quoad Sacra churches case, and we are glad to be able to state that their erections in that direction have been exceedingly creditable.

The church, which is the design of Mr Charles Wilson, architect, is in the early English Gothic style, principally that prevalent during the 13th century. It is singularly elegant, and does much credit to the taste and skill of the architect. It is 64 feet in length by 50 feet in width, and accommodates upwards of 800 sitters. In the centre of the principal or entrance front is placed the tower, having buttresses on each side, which rise to the base of the octagonal pinnacles surmounting the tower. Above the louvre windows is placed the clock surrounded by panelling, which adds much to the richness of the effect. The whole is surmounted by an embattled parapet, with perforated panels crisped at top. The side compartments of the church are plain, with angle buttresses and pinnacles.

The interior is treated in harmony with the exterior. The stairs to the gallery meet in the tower, and the entrance from it to the church has an exceedingly imposing effect ; from the landing the whole of the interior can be seen in one view. The iron pillars under the gallery are carried up to support the roof. From these pillars spring arches, with highly ornamental capitals and pendants next the walls. These arches are continued from the back wall round the whole of the church, forming a series of arches at the stone piers which support the tower. The ceiling is thus divided into three compartments ; the centre one is about 40 feet from the floor

and arched, having rib and ridge mouldings, with bosses at the intersections. The side aisles are groined with rib mouldings and bosses.

The front of the gallery is ornamented with crisped arches and drops. The design of the pulpit is exceedingly tasteful. The platform on each side is corbelled out from the wall, having on the front an ornamental screen, consisting of pointed arches, supported by small pillars,—the whole painted dark oak. Beneath the church is fitted up an efficient apparatus for heating and ventilation.

Beneath the very shadow of the church is built the manse. It is a neat little erection, containing about a dozen apartments. It consists of two stories, with a pointed gable projecting in front, which gives variety and at the same time harmonizes it with the church. The walls are already completed, and the internal arrangements are pretty far advanced. A short distance from this, and in a line with the church, a commodious and spacious two-storied school house has been built—the upper story being designed for a female school, with a dwelling house for the teacher. There is also a roomy court yard or play ground attached to it, and is surrounded by a high wall. The three structures have a most imposing appearance, and greatly improve the aspect of the town.

According to the Edinburgh Almanac, Mr Munro was ordained in 1836.

MARCH 9, 1850.

REV. JOHN MACINTYRE, M.A.,

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GREENLOANING.

IN making one of his most effective appeals Dr Chalmers asked where and what would his audience be a hundred years hence. The question led his hearers forward to the future, when their bones would be mingled with those of their ancestors, and when their spirits would have commenced a changeless eternity. A hundred years ago is nearly as interesting as a hundred years hence, personal considerations excepted. There are localities, and events, and places, which conjure up the departed, and present the generations which lie sleeping in the tomb engaged in the activities of life or the solemnities of religion. Who can enter such a church as that of the United Presbyterian Church of Greenloaning without finding himself circled with a cloud of witnesses, and listening to voices coming down from heaven beckoning the worshippers to the house eternal in the heavens? At the door of that venerable edifice stands the identical stool into which the freewill offerings of the people were thrown a century ago. The worms join with Father Time in attempting to reduce it to dust, but it has stood till generations have fallen, and now receives the offerings of the great grand-children of those who first contributed of their substance to the service of that sanctuary. On entering, the pews still remain which those occupied who have been a century in another world. The rude iron which held the laver of baptism, and around which sat the fathers and mothers of former days, still remains. Lying near the pulpit is the simple stand which held the sandglass, wont, in ante-watch and clock days, to measure out time to the preacher. When the text

was being given out the duty of the precentor was to turn the sandglass, and if the preacher did not close his sermon before it ran down twice, which occupied an hour, the precentor, with great formality, put down his Psalm book over the glass. Some preachers, even in these enlightened days, would be none the worse of a similar hint. The table seats are still the same at which sat, with hearts glowing with sacred love, those who have long inherited the promises. The dust among which are placed the footboards, has been consecrated by the feet of many generations, and the entire edifice remains a monument of the past—a rebuke to the vanity and ambition of man, and a proof of the fidelity and kindness of Him to whose service it has long been consecrated. At about half-past eleven, Sabbath week, the congregation made their way to the place where prayer has been weekly made for a hundred years. The day was cold—winter's snows mantled the face of the earth, and nature seemed asleep. Yet the congregation assembled as usual, and the subject of our sketch commenced his wonted services.

After the usual preliminaries he announced, for lecture, Acts viii. 3 to 5 inclusive. After glancing at the death of Stephen, which had been discussed in former lectures, he proceeded to speak of the chief agent in the persecution which followed the death of the martyr. He spoke of the conversion of Saul as a standing memorial of the power of the gospel, and one of the chief triumphs of the truth. Had Caiaphas the high priest thrown aside his mitre and his official robes—had Pilate himself bowed in submission to the King whom he had surrendered to be crucified—the marvel had, indeed, been small, on several accounts, compared with the conversion of him who stood by the clothes of the martyred Stephen, and who went from the martyr's death to hale men and women to prison. He then proceeded to show the state of the Church subsequent to the death of Stephen, and the events which characterised the infant church. The disciples scattered on the death of Stephen, went everywhere preaching the Word. Christ's command, to flee to another city when persecuted in this, was obeyed. The effect was altogether different from what Paul and his associates supposed. God thus brings good out of evil—makes the wrath of man to praise him—and restrains the remainder

thereof. He concluded by saying that we learn from the passage under discussion, 1st, What is the great duty of the Christian ministry ? and, 2d, The obligation of men to receive Christ. Christ is preached, that Christ may be received.

The lecture occupied about forty-five minutes, and was over about ten minutes to one. After prayer and praise the preacher gave out, as text, Luke xi. 2, "Our Father who art in heaven." He commenced by saying that the prayer was prescribed by Christ on two occasions. In the one case it is embodied in the sermon on the mount, and seemed to have been designed for the multitude. In the case before us it was delivered more pointedly to the disciples, who had thus addressed their Master, "Lord teach us to pray." Their desire, as had been stated in a former discourse, was that they might be like their Saviour, who had often retired to pray. Prayer they saw to be a duty with which they wished to comply, and a privilege which they wished to enjoy, and a preparative to the enjoyment of God here and hereafter. It is called the Lord's Prayer, in honour of its divine author. The prayer consists of eight parts. The first is introductory, the next six are petitions, and the last is an ascription of praise found in Matthew only. The introduction will have our present attention. We shall consider, 1st, The name here given to God, "Our Father," and, 2d, Consider our Father's dwelling—in heaven. To aid our conceptions of our Father in heaven let us consider the character and relations and conduct of an earthly father—never forgetting that earthly fathers are imperfect and sinful, and that our Father who is in heaven is absolutely and unchangeably perfect. Our Saviour teaches us to regard God as the great Author of our existence. But for the good pleasure of His will we and all that the world contains had never been. There was a time when neither sun, nor moon, nor stars appeared ; when the mighty space through which our globe revolves was dark and void ; before the mountains were brought forth ; ere ever the earth and the world were formed. Again, there was a time when countless stars sparkled in the sky—when the sun shone forth in new-born splendour, and the moon shed back his brightness, and the green earth smiled in light, and life, and joy ; but throughout its wide extent no human creature

moved to taste the joy, and lead by speech the new concert of praise which rose to the Creator. And from the speechless praise of these his works God might have remained infinitely blessed though he had never brought man into being. But God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Such is the brief account in the Bible of the origin of man. The fact that God is the Father of the family of man was acknowledged even by the heathens. Paul quoted to the Athenians one of their own poets in proof of this—"We are his offspring;" and reasoned from this to show the absurdity of degrading their Maker into stocks and stones. We do homage to our fathers of the flesh, but neglect the Father of our spirits. Augustine said, that if a sculptor, after finishing his work, could inspire his statue with motion, sense, and reason, and give it understanding and speech, the first thing it would do would be to fall down and adore its maker. God made the sun to shine, and he shines—he made the beasts to be subject to man, and they bow down their necks to his will; and shall man be the only creature that refuses to give homage to his Maker? But, 2d, Christ teaches men to call God Father, because he provides for their wants. The preacher beautifully illustrated God's paternal care, from Christ's Sermon on the Mount—where the lilies of the field are mentioned as proof of the Divine care. 3d, God is called Father, to teach men to approach him with confidence and affection. This was well illustrated by the confidence and affection placed on earthly parents. He said the term "father" opens in every heart springs of tender affection, streams of softening influence. The Christian gets nearer God than the man who merely views Him wheeling his throne on rolling worlds—the former sees his exceeding grace and kindness manifested to him freely through Christ Jesus.

II. Our Father's dwelling-place. (1.) *A place.*—We make the statement, because, judging from the prevailing turn of conversation, we apprehend there is a tendency, when men think of heaven, to think of it rather as a state of purely spiritual existence than as a fixed locality in some department of infinite space. We apprehend they are more apt to contemplate heaven as consisting of an indefinite number of disembodied intelligences with Deity as their glorified head, in

whose service they are constantly engaged, and from whom they draw unmixed felicity, than as a residence having certain prescribed limits, beyond which heaven is not, and within which there begins to spread before the delighted visitant a region whose every breath is fragrance, and whose every well-spring is music, inhabited by angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, lighted up with a beauty, and magnificence, and splendour, which are perceived by the approaching visitor progressively to increase till they become too bright for unveiled eye to look upon. Unquestionably it is the fact that heaven is a state of being comprehending, among its various orders, intelligences who once inhabited the world in which we now dwell, once of the same nature with ourselves, and subject to similar tribulations. That invests heaven with so many attractions, gives it so strong a claim upon our frequent meditations, and so often prompts those anxious, yet sanctifying, inquiries, What is the character of these blessed inhabitants? what are the means by which they attained their present elevated station? and how shall we ultimately be permitted to join their society? for magnificence without sentient being to enjoy it has no value, and heaven, if it were not within the reach of attainment, however much it might impress our mind with admiration and reverence on coming to the knowledge of its being the dwelling-place of the Most High and his angelic creatures, would cease to awaken our aspirations and keep alive our hopes, those springs of action God has with infinite wisdom seated in the soul. But it is wrong to contemplate heaven exclusively as a mere state of existence, we should view it also as a place adapted by infinite wisdom and lavish goodness to yield enjoyment. In Scripture it is described by images which address themselves directly to the senses, and the man who overlooks these and reduces heaven to a state of simple intellection, overlooks the teaching, and loses the import of revelation. Our Lord sought to comfort the hearts of his sorrowing disciples, by telling them he was going to prepare *mansions* for them. Paul consoled himself and others in the midst of their tribulations with the prospect of entering into a *house* not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The earthly Canaan was promised to the patri-

archs as the type of the heavenly, and thus they never suffered their hopes to expire, for it is said, "they desire a better country, that is an heavenly; wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." (2.) A place of happiness.—That country to which the patriarchs looked must have been heaven, for a better country than the earthly Canaan the sun shone not upon. It was a delightsome land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills. Bread was eaten in it without scarceness—a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive and honey. The pastures were clothed with flocks, and the valleys were covered over with corn. They shouted for joy—they also sang. The excellency of Carmel and the glory of Lebanon gave beauty as well as sublimity to its landscapes. The Lord himself was its munition of rocks. In Judah was God known, in Salem was his tabernacle—his dwelling-place was in Sion. But heaven is still the better country. There are spread fairer scenes, there grow richer fruits, and there shines a more glorious sun. The inhabitants of the better land eat of the fruits of immortality, assuage their thirst in streams of Divine love, the river of God that maketh glad the heavenly city, and bask under the beams of a Redeeming God and Father for evermore. (3.) A place as yet unseen.—Where this dwelling-place is; in what part of space it is founded, it is needless to conjecture, for conjecture can lead us to nothing surer than itself. But though we are unable to determine in what part of the infinitude of the Creator's works it is situated—and though it may be removed to such a distance from our sphere that, in the clearest night while worlds unnumbered sparkle, our eye may have never yet caught its "purest ray serene," we may be assured that there is such a world, and that it is a glorious habitation. And it is well for us that it is concealed; and on mature consideration we cannot fail to admire the wisdom of God in interposing a veil of impenetrable obscurity between himself and us as we are at present constituted. Would our faith, our hope, our love be increased, if we were admitted to a distant prospect of the majesty of his court and mysterious presence? when if, as on the lightning's wing, we were car-

ried, it might be, past stars innumerable within the boundaries of that region where the Creator has established his dwelling-place, and stood before the myriad ranks of celestial forms opening their lines, like parting flames, to an inconceivable distance, till we saw high beyond us blazing more than ten thousand suns, the lowest beams of the Eternal's throne? If the power of his providence were to sustain us under the physical effect of such a spectacle from falling down as dead, like John when he beheld in vision the glory of a risen Lord, "His head and his hair white like wool, as white as snow, and his countenance as the sun when he shineth in his strength," what, we ask you, would be its moral effect? Would our confidence, our love, be increased by the sight? Or, would not an overpowering impression of awful purity and tremendous majesty repress every feeling of confidence and love as presumptuous, and make us cry out, like the terrified Moses, "I exceedingly fear and quake."—In conclusion—1st, This introduction of our Lord's prayer should show us the propriety of addressing God with sentiments of profound reverence. By a wise arrangement he holdeth back the face of his throne, lest its awful grandeur should overwhelm our nature and incapacitate us for cherishing feelings essential to our comfort. He has removed us to such a distance from his court that its majesty does not subject us to overpowering alarm. Yet he has revealed enough of his character and his ways to keep us under a sense of salutary fear and becoming veneration. By teaching us that heaven is "the habitation of his holiness" he warns us of his awful sanctity and the reverence due to his great name. By declaring that his throne is prepared in heaven he would impress us with his unlimited authority and uncontrollable power; and by revealing that his dwelling is in the high and lofty place he would remind us that his eyes are in every place. 2d, A design of this introduction is to teach us submission to our heavenly Father's will. 3d, Learn from it the spirit of all acceptable prayer. We go to a Father. O let us, then, draw near with confidence, and believe that he rewards those who seek him.

The discourse was over at two o'clock, having occupied about fifty minutes. After the usual concluding services the

congregation was dismissed at a quarter past two, having been assembled rather more than two and-a-half hours.

The outline shows that the subject of our sketch deals in substantial matters. The lecture was chiefly practical. A little more of the expository might have augmented its interest, but the experimental and inferential were duly attended to. The discourse was one of high merit. Its introduction was pathetic and short—its two general divisions comprehensive and textual, and the conclusion appropriate and impressive. Not only were the views evangelical and accurate but they were presented in language terse, and often strong and graphic. There were some passages of great beauty and elegance, displaying a chastened and vivid fancy, and very considerable powers of imagination, under the control of a sound judgment. The discourses revealed a great amount of classical and critical information. The discoveries of science were seized with a strong hand, and made to minister to religion. The sublime walks of astronomy were pursued with firm and intelligent step, as the highway to the throne, and the residence of the Eternal was solemnly adumbrated in the midst of the sublimities of the starry system. But there were indications of heart as well as of mind and imagination. There were much earnestness and energy in the preacher's delivery. He looked not on with coldness as he pointed out the Almighty wheeling his throne on rolling worlds. He seemed conscious of the sublimity of the scene. He spoke not of the cross in cold set phrase, but as one who draws his inspiration from the scene. We specially liked the prayers of the subject of our sketch :—man's degeneracy and Christ's all-sufficiency were largely insisted on. The wonders of the cross were pourtrayed at length, while the blood that cleanseth from all sin was supplicated in all its healing and cleansing power. Though there is nothing forbidding in the manner of the preacher, like many besides he has paid less attention to the communicative than to the acquisitive department. The discourses, as we have seen, were built up with much ability, but his utterance is not so ready as it might be, and, consequently, some of his best conceptions are rather damaged in their birth. A little care will make his manner attractive as well as impressive.

Mr Macintyre is a native of Catrine, and was educated at Glasgow University, where he took the degree of M.A. with honours. He attended the United Secession Hall, under Drs Mitchell, Balmer, and Duncan. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, and ordained in 1841 in his present charge. Mr Macintyre is the fifth clergyman of the Greenloaning congregation, which is one of the oldest in the United Presbyterian Church (formerly it was of the United Secession). The congregation was formed as far back as 1739, shortly after the constitution of the original Presbytery, which occurred in 1734. At first the charge was connected with the Comrie church—the clergyman officiating alternately at each. Mr John Ferguson was the first clergyman, and the ordination sermon at Greenloaning was on the text, “There was a man sent from God whose name was *John*.” The similarity of name caused the text to be noticed, and it is still spoken of in that locality. He was settled only 18 months when he became the victim of consumption. He was succeeded by the Rev. Mr Russell, who ministered to the church between 30 and 40 years. Mr Meiklejoin, a distinguished student, succeeded him, but remained only a short time, and was followed by Mr Robert Paterson, who, after a pastorate of nine years, was called to Sunderland, and was succeeded by the present incumbent, the subject of our sketch. The settlement was a very unanimous one, and, since, matters have proceeded very cordially, and with increasing prosperity. Bible classes and missionary operations are attended to, and the church is reckoned in a better state than at any previous period of its history. Connected with the church is an excellent manse, glebe, and garden. The place of worship is supposed to have been built about 1750, a hundred years ago, but its early annals have been lost.

In general, Mr Macintyre writes out his discourses fully, but uses no notes in delivery, as notes are not fashionable in that part of the country. In summer there is an interval of an hour between services, but in winter there is no interval. Mr Macintyre is greatly respected by all denominations in the locality.

REV. JAMES BEGG, D.D.,

NEWINGTON, EDINBURGH.

THE study of the Bible is the best preventive and cure of infidelity. Though it gives no dissertation on the causes or cure of unbelief, every page of it rebukes the man who dares to deny or doubt its statements. The philosophical inquirer finds everything in the sacred page which he could wish to solve all doubt and to confirm faith. If the Bible is the book of God we naturally expect that its statements would be in accordance with nature, with correct science, with the most vigorous philosophy, and, above all, with humanity—not humanity provincialised or localised, but with humanity as it generally presents itself in every age and in every clime. A remarkable adherence to nature and truth marks every part of it, and especially the teachings of Christ. His simple words commend themselves to every conscience and heart. Instead of being surrounded by the local influences amid which he delivered them in Palestine, they have a breadth and comprehensiveness which render them as suitable at the poles as the equator—in Britain as in Palestine. If the Bible and the gospel were indeed designed for all people, we infer that they will address men as they are to be found in all ages—and indeed so it is. Did it ever strike our readers in these days when so much is being said of the teeming masses which crowd the lanes and wynds of great cities, that on these the Son of man, as he taught the multitudes in Palestine, seems to have had a benevolent eye? Knowing that, as great cities congregated, the human family there would be dense masses of the destitute and outcast, he spake a parable in which the Father

of all is represented as a great householder who spreads a common table, and commissions his servants to go to the streets and lanes and invite the destitute and famishing to a rich banquet. Neither in that parable nor any other portion of the Bible are God's servants in gospel times commanded to go to the fashionable west ends—these will have their due share of attention without any special injunction. But knowing how apt the professors of the religion of the Friend of sinners were to overlook the destitute, special commands are left on record regarding them, and it is at the peril of his people if they disregard them. We can suppose even an apostle almost elated when he stood on Mar's hill, or when he delivered his eloquent oration before Agrippa ; but these were not the scenes of his most effective efforts. The common people heard him, as they had heard his Master, gladly. The gospel is designed to raise the fallen and restore the outcast, though too many in our day would rather convert a king, even though that king should be a miserable tatooed savage, than convert a Mary Magdalene or a Simon. Protestants marvel at Catholicism addressing kings and rulers, while it leaves the masses in midnight darkness; but have Protestants no room to marvel at themselves for respecting persons, and for being more anxious to minister to those in comfort and affluence than to obey the Saviour's command ? Go out into the highways and hedges, the streets and lanes, and compel them to come in. The practice of many Christians would almost warrant the inference that no souls are worth care unless souls housed in comfort. We are gratified to find an eminent man, whom we would style, not in mockery but in sober seriousness, the apostle of the "streets and lanes," reminding not a few of the people of Glasgow last Sabbath, that the dwellers in our wynds have souls—souls on which the Saviour cast an eye even in the days of his flesh, and which he compassionates still. In opening Union Free Church of this city, he preached on the appropriate text, Luke xiv. 23, 24, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men who were bidden shall partake of my supper." He commenced his discourse by saying that

The object of Christ in speaking this parable was to represent the gospel method of salvation under an image. This was one of many images employed for the same purpose. Sometimes man is represented as under the power of disease, and Christ is represented as the great Physician. Is there no balm in Gilead, no physician there? Why, then, is not the health of the daughters of my people recovered? In other places of the sacred volume man is often spoken of as a captive, and Christ gives liberty to captives. Man is said to be dead, and Christ is the resurrection and the life. Awake thou that sleepest, arise, &c. Man, in the text, is set before us as perishing with hunger and exposure, and God, as a great Householder, invites him to his house and table. The object of all these several figures is the same. That many have been invited to the blessings of salvation the many who have proclaimed the gospel since its first announcement in Eden are proof. We have only to consider the multitudes that have declared it, that are publishing it, and that will proclaim it till the mystery of God is finished, to see that many have been and shall be invited to the feast. Yet, alas, few accept the invitation—so few that the context informs us, that *all* began to make excuse, and to plead that which was lawful in itself for neglecting the proffered blessings. The world stands between man and the blessings of God's salvation. Love not the world, is the inspired caution. Yet though men despise the invitation it is repeated. The servants went out as they were commanded, and with some success now. Part of the house was occupied, but yet there was room, for in God's house there are many mansions. In answer to the servants, who stated that there was still room, the text was spoken, Go out to the highways and fill up the spare space. The highways and hedges bear the same proportion to the country as streets and lanes to the city—intimating that to every son of Adam, however far from God and happiness, the word of this salvation is to be sent. Preach the gospel to every creature. The text includes three things. 1st, The parties introduced—the sender and the sent—the Lord and servants. 2d, The message addressed by the Lord to the servants. 3d, The threatening connected with the message. These ideas were eloquently illustrated.

The preacher rather surprised his audience by reading the 41st chapter of Genesis, which contains part of the story of Joseph. Many were at a loss to see the connection between the opening of a Christian place of worship and Pharaoh's dreams, &c. However all difficulties were speedily solved. After the chapter was read well, the preacher offered a few explanatory remarks. He drew a parallel between Joseph and Christ, and concluded with mentioning the fact, that in like manner as Joseph was taken from prison to be lord of Egypt—to rule its people and regulate and distribute its stores, so was Jesus exalted on high to give gifts to men—to be head over all things to the church, which is his body. We had in a former sketch, to object to the manner in which remarks were interspersed with God's word; but in this case they were made with great propriety, brevity, and force. In about five minutes the preacher shed a flood of light on what appeared to be out of place, and made the historical the handmaid of the spiritual and eternal. The discourse was one which but few preachers could produce. The preacher had no notes, yet he spoke with great fluency, and his language was neat, terse, and lucid. The introduction analogically brought out the import and design of the words of the text, and the outline of the discourse was extremely clear, logical, and textual. Both the general divisions—the parties—the message and the threatening—and the subdivisions—arose naturally out of the words, and exhausted their leading thoughts. Nothing could be more complete than the mapping and filling up of the discourse. The preacher gave clear ideas of the love and grace of God—of the degeneracy and recovery of man—of the Godhead and humanity of Christ, and of the duty of God's servants to compel the outcasts to come into the house of God. The only part of the discussion which we were not sure that we fully understood was his reference to the three views taken of the gospel message. The first view he called untrue, because it taught that an atonement had been made for all men, and yet, when discussing the second view, or the modified form of the first, he sanctioned it as a glorious truth, that the blood shed was of infinite value, and that, had it so pleased God, it was sufficient as an atonement for a thousand worlds. If we do not mistake,

the preacher, by these two statements, merely brought out the old difference between the efficiency and sufficiency of the atonement. If our preacher believes in the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ, he surely did not mean to say that the salvation of a part of the human family so exhausted it that there remained no merit for others. If he meant to say that though the atonement was of infinite value yet many would derive no benefit from it, he merely announced a fact which all believe. We think our preacher, in order to maintain the sovereignty of God, barely avoided the charge of inconsistency. Dr Leonard Woods, Dr Ralph Wardlaw, and others, have shown that the sovereignty of God may be fully vindicated by those who contend that the provisions of the gospel are co-extensive with its invitations. We are not sure that the preacher gave the exact etymological or theological sense of the word *atonement*.* The primary idea is not that of one doing a certain thing for another, but the idea is making parties formerly alienated one. We believe the views of the preacher are quite consistent, if carefully stated, but, certainly, he did them on this occasion scanty justice. All admit that the preacher's warrant to go to compel men to come in is the authority and command of God; but he will obey the command with but little heart who doubts in his own mind whether, in the provisions of the everlasting covenant, those may be saved whom he invites.

The following strikes us as the leading characteristics of Dr Begg's mind and manner. The first thing that commands the attention of the stranger is the preacher's appearance. Those who know him only from what they have heard of him in connection with ecclesiastical and educational movements, have, we should think, misconceived of his appearance. The man possessed of courage to do battle with a Candlish on the Educational question, and with an Arnot on the Wynd question, who beards the lions in their dens, is wont to be fancied as a Wallace or a Knox in aspect and mein. Never was fancy

* We have just perused a Discourse preached by him at Paisley, in December, 1832, on the text, "Go ye into all the world," &c. The views of the Atonement there are substantially the same as the above, but a little more guarded.

farther from fact. He is no son of thunder, but of mild aspect, small and regular features, and of gentle and timid manner. When he enters the pulpit he occupies himself with his work, and never looks round on the audience. During singing he joins earnestly, holding the Psalm-book in his hand, and in prayer he is orderly, correct, and unimpassioned. When he commences to preach he speaks slowly and distinctly, and generally has one of his hands slightly raised. His teaching is more didactic than rhetorical. He seldom has any stately climax or finely-rounded period, but maintains an equal, simple, forcible, and lucid style. He is emphatically a teacher, and never condescends to the declamatory. He expresses the greatest possible amount of matter in the briefest language.

The mind of the subject of our sketch is strong and firm. He takes a full grasp of a subject, and holds it fast, never allowing himself to be diverted from his leading idea. His controversy on the Educational and Wynd questions proves him to be possessed of great mental vigour, and of a large catholic heart. Indeed, we hold it impossible that the man of such large heart and liberal views as Dr Begg could hold the doctrine of the atonement in what is regarded as its narrow aspect. Our readers will remember that in the last Free Assembly he was the chief champion of unsectarian schools, and that he has plied the cause of the dwellers in the wynds of Edinburgh and Glasgow with a pathos and energy seldom equalled. To his efforts the present attempt to carry ragged churches to our wynds may easily be traced. He is at all hands allowed to be one of the most liberal-minded ministers of the Free Church. His independence is becoming proverbial. He does not seem to consider the Free Church one whit more infallible than other churches, and just follows her plans as far as he thinks them correct, but no farther. Indeed, his views have not seldom been found in direct antagonism to those of many of his brethren, yet he avows what he believes so frankly and manily that he creates almost no enemies.

Dr Begg is a native of New Monkland in Lanarkshire, of which parish his late father was minister for about fifty years. The subject of our sketch studied at Glasgow College. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Hamilton, and immediately

appointed to assist Mr (now Professor) Buchanan in the church of North Leith. He was ordained soon after in a new chapel at Dumfries. After forming a congregation there he was translated to Edinburgh, where he assisted Dr Jones in Lady Glenorchy's Chapel for twelve months, after which he went to the Middle Church, Paisley, of which he was minister for three years. Thence he came to Liberton (in all cases on the call of the people), where he continued till the Disruption. He still preaches to a large number of his former people, his church being at the outskirts of Edinburgh. He succeeded in getting an additional church erected at Paisley, and another at Gilmerton in the parish of Liberton. He has been much engaged in all the educational and other movements of the church of which he is so distinguished a minister.

FEBRUARY 8, 1851.

REV. JOHN NEWLANDS, D.D.,

PERTH.

NOT more different are the stars that shine in the azure skies above than are the lights of the intellectual and spiritual world around. No two of all the glittering train that gleam in the vast expanse can be found exactly similar in volume or orbit. One glares fiercely and fierily, another scarcely shoots its gentle beams to our world. One moves almost imperceptibly, while others hasten through their course in the bright skies. Nor is the difference in orb and orbit accidental or arbitrary. Each has a mission and a destiny—and no other form or sphere would answer the purposes of Him who “counts the number of the stars, and calls them all by their names.” And in like manner the lesser lights that rule over the destinies of this lower world of ours are distinguished by an equal diversity. Among the three thousand occupants of our Scottish pulpits we have found very considerable diversity.* We have seen some of the two hundred that have passed under review wheeling and thundering on in their erratic courses—we have seen others almost stationary, and yet shedding a healthful steady light,

* We do not generally take any notice of what is said either in praise or dispraise of these sketches, but there is one objection so often and so ignorantly made that we may briefly refer to it. It has been said that, according to these sketches all the ministers in Scotland are very splendid men. This is certainly pronouncing the sentence before the evidence is heard. We have not yet noticed 200 of the 3000, not 1 in 15 of our Scottish clergy, and it would not certainly be very marvellous though a fifteenth of them were passable preachers. But we have not praised even that number. In not a few cases blame predominates. There remain 2800, and of many of these it is not likely anything will be written for some time to come.

while some few emit a disastrous and deadly influence. We have seen some who, like the blazing comet, draw all eyes and all minds towards them, and we have seen others, lights in a dark place, admired by the few who come within the sweep of their narrow spheres. Some we have seen following the paths that others have for ages trodden, and others breaking off at a tangent and starting on a new career. We are now to point out one restraining his beams and reluctantly allowing the latent fires to blaze on the altar—one who sheds mild benignant rays, and in whose light many a one in the "Fair City" has rejoiced for a long season.

Last Sabbath he whose name stands at the head of these remarks preached in Shamrock street United Presbyterian Church, on Malachi iv. 2, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings." He commenced by saying that what is a blessing and a pledge of peace to the righteous is a source of terror and condemnation to the wicked. To some the gospel is a savour of life and to others the savour of death. The manifestation of God in our nature had this effect. The prophecy before us refers to the time of Christ's coming. The verse preceding the text refers to the unbelievers of the time of Christ's appearance. But while that appearance was the intimation of their destruction, those who had availed themselves of previous dispensations, to them would the Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings. The text presents four topics. It leads us to consider—1st, The Saviour as the Sun of righteousness; 2d, The rising of that Sun; 3d, The benign influence he exerts; and, 4th, The character of those to whom the promise is more immediately addressed.—1st, The text leads us to consider the Saviour as the Sun of righteousness. We consider him first as the Sun, and next, as the Sun of righteousness. In order to give us exact ideas of the Saviour he is compared to the most magnificent objects. He is here emblemed forth by the grandest object in nature—not to any secondary luminary that shines by a borrowed light, but to the sun, around which all other bodies revolve and shine by his brightness. What the natural sun is to the planets Christ is to his people. No other figure is so frequently employed to

emblem forth Christ as is this figure. He is the light and life and joy of his people. The sun is the source of light to the natural world. Men have been long accustomed to look on the sun as the source of light to all the planetary system. The Scripture speaks not of the facts of science in the abstract, but according to the ideas men entertained of them at the time they were written. Whatever may be the fact of the case as regards the sun it admits of no doubt that Christ communicates all the true knowledge men possess of God, of the way of salvation, and eternal life. The Sun is, (2), The source of life. Though it is well known that the sun cannot produce life, we associate him with life, because there would be no life in his absence. His influence is essential to animal and vegetable life. So with the Sun of righteousness. He shines that men may have life, &c. He came that they might have life. But, (3), The sun is the dispenser of joy, and happiness, and gladness. The sun dispels gloom, and gives feelings of cheerfulness. A pleasant thing it is to behold the sun. But Christ is more than a sun. He is the Sun of righteousness—a Sun in a spiritual and moral sense. That system of which he is the centre is a spiritual system. As far as the moral and spiritual surpass the natural so far must the Sun of righteousness surpass the natural. No created being can be compared to Jesus. He possessed every possible attribute,—wisdom, benevolence, and piety, are his; but none of his attributes are so much referred to as his righteousness. He is Jehovah's righteous servant—Jesus Christ the righteous—the righteous Judge—in righteousness he maketh war, and he is the Sun of righteousness. This may have a reference to his personal character, to his work, and to the blessings he imparts to mankind. He is not merely relatively righteous but absolutely righteous. The righteousness may refer to his work which he accomplished when he brought in everlasting righteousness—the righteousness which man needs as a guilty and as a polluted creature. It refers also to the blessings which the Saviour dispenses, and which render the guilty pure and happy. But the second topic of the text is the rising of that sun. The text refers not to the sun in his mid-day effulgence, nor to the setting sun, but to the sun rising in the east—the sun in his

most sublime and interesting aspect. This may refer to several things. It may refer, 1st, To the manifestation of Christ when he appeared in the world in the fulness of time. It may refer, 2d, To the manifestation of Christ in the preaching of the gospel. It may refer, 3d, To the manifestation of the Saviour in the mind and conscience of the sinner; and, 4th, It may refer to the appearance of Christ without sin unto salvation at the great day of final judgment. The preacher illustrated these several ideas at considerable length. He then went on to the third topic of the text—the benign influence ascribed to the Saviour. He rises with healing in his wings. The question is parabolical, and occurs in Ruth and frequently in the Psalms. It expresses the believer's safety, as under the wings of the Almighty. It here suggests the spiritual healing the Saviour brings to the soul. The fourth topic is the character of those addressed, "You that fear my name." This occurred when Christ appeared to those who waited at that time for the consolation of Israel when Christ Jesus was manifested in the flesh. Those who had improved their former privileges enjoyed more. To him that hath more shall be given. In conclusion, Let us cherish exalted conceptions of Christ. Let us consider him in the various aspects in which he is presented in Scripture, and let us prize the blessings which he brings. Let us earnestly seek the diffusion of the name of Christ, and the blessings he imparts, through the nations of the earth.

The discourse occupied about fifty-five minutes.

The extreme plainness of the discourse is probably the first thing that will strike the casual observer. The divisions adopted arose naturally out of the text, and the subdivisions were also extremely simple, and were very neatly expressed. The text contains a very exalted figure, which the preacher discussed with effect and propriety. The figure, in unskilful hands, would appear to be very much mixed and incongruous. To compare Christ to the sun seems natural enough, but here we have a Sun of "righteousness," a Sun with "wings." The preacher very beautifully accounted for this seeming incongruity, by remarking that Christ was the Sun of a moral and spiritual universe, and therefore must needs possess attributes which the natural sun requires not. The illustrations were

very neat and concise, and the preacher made no attempt at the abstruse or profound. While the intelligent hearer could learn from his discourse that he is not ignorant of the discoveries of science, he so very modestly expressed himself that some would see neither learning nor eloquence in the discourse. We do not say that in it nor in the other preached in the forenoon, in the same place, the preacher displayed great depth or comprehensiveness of thought, or that *suspiria profunda* marked his progress, yet there were excellencies of mind and heart of a very superior order manifested. The discourse, if we may compare it to a landscape, was finely laid out. The scene was a plain sloping towards the sun, and basking in his beams. Every fence and every field were in the most perfect state. The fields were not very extensive, and the fences were not impassable, but there were a sweetness and loveliness about the landscape which rendered it attractive. The pleasure grounds were laid out with much skill and taste, and were enriched with the cooling stream, and the sheltering trees, and the verdant evergreens, but the scene was destitute of the romantic and the sublime. No rugged mountains raised their peaks to the skies—no tempest grew, and gathered over the landscape. There were loveliness and sweetness and grace, but the majestic and sublime were absent. The preacher is evidently one of mild aspect and manners. He is as far removed from a Boanerges as one can well be. He sheds a light, but it is the mild moonlight rather than the penetrating rays of the meridian sun. As he speaks the lightning flashes, but no thunder is heard, and the lightning itself is not the fierce thunderbolt which rends the mountains, nor the lurid forked flash that strikes with terror and awe—it is the clear stream of the twilight which performs its mission effectively, but unostentatiously and noiselessly. In listening to him the wish one has is, that he would give vent more fully to the fire that is evidently burning within his own bosom. He has the appearance of one struggling to suppress emotion, and reducing what would wish to come forth with power and pathos to the whisper of the echo. He seems to consider the “voice crying” as one of the greatest of evils, and reduces his own full, clear, and excellent voice to a suppressed sigh—he greatly too much

conceals the energy within. The voice belies the appearance of the preacher—a feeble voice proceeding from a strong and robust form is somewhat incongruous. Were our preacher to give vent to a mind evidently well stored and severely disciplined, he would preach with much greater effect—at least in Glasgow. Sense in our city scarcely gets credit for being sense unless it is accompanied with sound. Many here would rather have Sinai smoking and thundering than Calvary silent and oracular.

His manner is quite natural, and his gestures, on the whole, unexceptionable. He speaks neatly and correctly, without the use of notes. He is evidently one who possesses the organ of order in great perfection. Every sentence, as well as the general outline, must be arranged according to the most approved principles of a neat style.

Mr Newlands was ordained minister over his present congregation in 1823. He was chosen Moderator by the United Associate Synod at their meeting in October, 1846; and in the following year, when the union between the Relief and Secession Churches was consummated, instead of electing a new Moderator, they did him the honour to re-elect him, so that he had the honour of representing that branch of the church to which he belonged on that auspicious occasion. He has been twenty-seven years minister of the South United Presbyterian Congregation, Perth, and during all that time he has lived in the enjoyment of much harmony with his congregation. He is much respected among all classes in the town of Perth, and is greatly beloved by his attached people.

NOVEMBER 9, 1850.

R E V. M R B O E,

DUNBLANE.

MAN naturally and universally entertains a feeling of regard and veneration for the old. Though but of yesterday he would grasp eternity, and is never more pleased than when he plays with the hoary locks of time. Whether this feeling arises from viewing things abstractly or relatively it is difficult to determine. Indeed it is a question whether man can view any one thing as wholly insulated. Connection, dependence, relationship, are so obviously laws of the universe that man cannot sever them from anything he surveys. Looks he at the sun!—the glorious orb of day—he loves his beams, because they light and warm him—he loves them more because they fell on Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. He loves the sun, because Adam, and Abel, and Noah, were lighted and warmed by his influences, and because throughout the changes of time he shines on with undimmed splendour. If man turns to the earth there too he finds occasionally his taste for the old gratified. He looks abroad on the flowers and the grass, but these are the images of change, and he wishes to fall back on the permanent. Our own native land is full of magnificent memorials of the past—memorials that seem tinged with that eternity to which man's powers tend, and which his aspirations embrace. The everlasting hills that have raised their heads during all time yield him pleasant contemplation. They have stood and watched the revolutions of kingdoms—around them the thick darkness has gathered and the fierce lightnings have played. They stood till the sun wiped their grim brows, and looked serene after the war of elements had passed over. But

there are antiquities with still more of the human in their elements—antiquities associated with humanity in its various forms of greatness, ambition, goodness, and piety. No scene can be compared with the remnants of Scottish cathedrals—cathedrals that at all times command around them many associations, but specially sacred at such a time as this, when the superstitions of which they were long the habitation are again asserting their right to possess them. It was our privilege, on a late occasion, to stand within the precincts of the venerable old pile of Dunblane—a building that has witnessed not only the warring of elements in their sublimest moods, but which has been the theatre of human passion—the site of the darkest superstition, and the locale of some of the brightest triumphs of the great Reformation.

The morning when we first saw this magnificent ruin had just broke after a night of drenching rain. The large drops, pendent from the hoary walls, were glistening in the morning sun. The graves in and around it were soaked with rain, and a dulness crept over the spirit of those who would dare to meditate among the dripping tombs. Cold was the bed of the sleepers of centuries. The careless foot sank deep among the mould which was one day instinct with life, and which will, on a coming morning, when the earth shall cast forth her dead, put on forms of beauty and loveliness fairer than the fairest forms of earth. We passed round this great mausoleum, and every step conjured around us the mighty dead. Everywhere the sculptured stone was struggling to tell of some dust it was set to watch; but the stone itself needed a memorial, for the hand of time was fast blotting out its message, and leaving its charge unnoticed and unmarked. By and by the calm of the Sabbath morning was broken by the Sabbath-going bell. The sleepers in the dust slept on; but the living were gathering, and entering the part of the cathedral still so far preserved as to afford shelter for worshippers. And what a place for worship! Around were tombs closed but yesterday, and tombs closed a thousand years ago—bodies still scarcely corrupted, and bodies reduced to the minutest ashes—stones raised by affection which was still bleeding, and stones raised by those whose memories have perished. Some 30 generations had sat

in these pews, and then lain down to sleep till the heavens are no more. Some had gone down to these graves with their bones full of the sins of their youth, and others like a shock of corn in his season. Within these venerable walls there had assembled, at the hour of worship, the representatives of the present generation. The holy house where their fathers had worshipped was not crowded, but still there was an assembly of sincere and attentive worshippers. At length the pulpit was occupied by one comparatively young in years. Part of a Psalm was sung (the 145th), which aided to work out the thoughts of perpetuity which the sacred place suggested. Prayer was then offered, redolent with scriptural sentiment and language. The last part of the 3d chapter of Galatians was read and expounded, and after a few verses more were sung, and the Lord's prayer repeated, Rev. xviii. 5, was announced as text—"Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The preacher said that this was a second discourse from the same text. In the first discourse he had shown from the context, and from the history and character of the Church of Rome, that the warning or commandment of the text is undoubtedly to separate from that corrupt church, and he had there, at great length, discussed her doctrine of pretended infallibility, as the foundation and cement of the whole system, demonstrating that doctrine to be contrary alike to reason, to history, and to the word of God. He now proceeded to show that the church was not only fallible, but had actually erred, and erred greatly from the truth. In proof he directed attention, 1st, to her idolatry. The Scripture denounces no sin so frequently as the sin of idolatry, and yet in this sin the church of Rome indulges. He then compared the prohibitions to that sin with the doctrines of a catechism sanctioned by the Popes, which teaches the adherents of that faith to worship and supplicate the Virgin Mary and other saints. The preacher read from their own authorised catechism his proofs of the idolatry of that church. His 2d particular was, her mutilation of the word of God, and her audacious substitution and addition of commandments of her own. He here read at length from the catechism referred to the ten commandments as held by the Roman Church, which excludes the

second command, obliterates the fourth, substituting another in its place, and divides the tenth into two to make up the number. He then said that the catechism contains the following :—" Add now to the commandments of God these few which the church has added." These are six—To hear mass every Sunday and other festivals; to fast during Lent, &c.; to go to confession at least once a-year; to receive the communion at least at Easter; to pay tithes; and not to celebrate marriage during the prohibited seasons. He then read the close of Revelation, as the doom of those who thus added to or took from God's word. His third proof of the corruption of the Romish church was the pretensions of her priesthood to forgive sins, to assume the prerogative of God, and usurp his place. This the priesthood do by pretending to forgive sin in children by baptism, and in adults by absolution in the sacrament of penance. His fourth charge was, that the Romish church withholds the Bible and the communion cup from the people. He stated that he might call attention to many other vital errors in the Church of Rome, such as her idolatrous masses for the dead; her purgatorial fires to purge away the remains of venial sins; and her pretended supremacy, which, wherever it has been acknowledged, has been found incompatible either with civil or religious liberty—but enough had been said to enforce the warning of the text. Hence he concluded by warning his hearers against Popery in all its forms, and against Puseyism, much of which existed, not only in England, but in our own Presbyterian land. He urged them to adhere to the Word of God, as the only source of wisdom and the foundation of religion, and a sound Protestantism.

The remarks on the chapter occupied about a quarter of an hour, and the sermon about half an hour. The entire service, which is the only service of the Sabbath, occupied an hour and three quarters.

To us the most objectionable part of the service was the psalmody. The leader sang, on the whole, very well, but the people supported him very ill in general, and, on one occasion, almost no one joined. Indeed, we were satisfied that the people sadly neglect that important part of worship. Classes for singing either exist not, or, if they exist, they have as yet

failed to teach the people to sing with the understanding and the heart. As regards the preacher, it is evident that he has both learning and ability to preach a good discourse; but it struck us that he was imperfectly prepared. This may be owing to bad health, as he certainly looks far from robust. There was nothing said contrary to a form of sound words. Both his prayers and discourses were what are termed evangelical. At first his manner appears cold and uninteresting, and it is not till he has spoken some time that anything like animation appears. The discourse struck us as particularly suitable for such a place as the cathedral in which it was delivered. There John Knox had awakened his terrible thunders against Popery, and at his instigation the building had been partially destroyed. Since then there have not been wanting witnesses for the truth to protest against the errors of the Papacy, and it were indeed a lamentation, if, at a time like this, there were not a man to contend for the faith that Knox preached. We are satisfied that the present incumbent is quite able to do battle with the errors of Popery, were he to turn his attention to the question with that intensity which successful combat with that dread system demands. He gave evidence that he possessed not a few of the genuine requisites of a successful preacher and controversialist. He quoted not the opinions of opposers of the system, but those of its advocates, as far as these can be ascertained; and these, instead of garbling and mistaking, he read from their own authoritative catechism. He put his arguments very fairly; and though he did not refute the errors he quoted with any elaborate reasoning, he pointed out their unscriptural tendency and dangerous effects with considerable force, and denounced the system in eloquent and impassioned phraseology.

In estimating one in the position of the subject of this notice, it must be remembered that he wants that stimulus which a large city and keen competition cause. He found a congregation in the cathedral—a congregation not likely to change its faith; and, in the present state of religious parties, not very likely to enlarge to any great extent, and therefore satisfies himself with respectable pulpit appearances. We say not but the *easy*, off-hand manner which characterised both lecture and sermon

may edify the people to whom they were addressed, but still there is such a thing as bringing up a people to a higher standard, as well as lowering instruction to suit present attainments. At all events the preacher makes a sad mistake who satisfies himself with respectable mediocrity, and who does not thoroughly prepare for the pulpit. There is no doubt but elaborate preparation may be thrown away on a listless and restless audience; but it is better that it should be so than that a man of talent should fall back on a tame mediocrity, and preach as if there were no judges of effort, and no reward for laudable ambition.

We do not pretend to know whether the catechism from which our preacher quoted is held to be authority by Catholics generally. We find the greatest difficulty in discovering what they hold authoritatively. But granting that his authority was acknowledged, he certainly treated Catholics with proper respect, and their system with a candour and fairness highly creditable to his good feeling and taste. And yet we could not, when hearing him, divest ourselves of the feeling that the discourse scarcely came up to the importance of the subject, and of the circumstances. The preacher stood where all the mummeries of a pestiferous superstition had been enacted during many a dark day, and while many generations were born, and died, amid the grossest darkness—a place in which very many thousands, now the dwellers in other worlds, had frequently assembled, not to have their minds informed and invigorated—not to have their faculties quickened and strengthened, but where they would be prepared to be the miserable serfs of miserable rulers, and renounce their liberties as men and as Christians. Around him lay the ashes of a priesthood who, too long, had occupied the same place—ashes, not of gods who could forgive sin, but indiscriminate, unsightly dust. The sun that witnessed all these performances still spanned the azure vault. The water that swept past the holy place, as it wended its way to the mighty ocean, was still gurgling on. True, the preacher quoted what was more commanding still—he referred us to the tables of stone written by the finger of God; but he said nothing of stones within the reach of his eye, almost equally legibly written by the same

Omnipotent, unchangeable hand, and which significantly anticipate the expiry of time and the commencement of eternity. Men are moved by the Word of God—men are still moved with circumstances—and he who is wise will observe the times, and find a present God in the ruined wall and in the sculptured stone.

We understand that Mr Boe is reckoned, by competent judges, a highly respectable preacher, and that his first pulpit appearances gave evidence of great future eminence—an eminence which he is perfectly able to reach, if health and energy and purpose shall be his. The erection where he exercises his ministry is a stirring one—sufficient almost to make the stones cry out. Apathy or indifference in such a place must be reckoned among the highest crimes against propriety and against antiquity.

The subject of our sketch is a native of Closeburn, Dumfriesshire, and was educated at the same school which sent forth the late great Dr Hunter of St Andrew's, Dr Gillespie, his successor, Dr Brown, late of Free St John's, Glasgow, and Dr Carson, late of the High School, Edinburgh. He was ordained in 1844, and shortly afterwards was settled in his present charge, and he has laboured with much acceptance. The church is the gift of the Crown, but the presentation of Mr Boe was at the request of the people. He performs the duties of his ministry without ostentation. He takes a deep interest in the welfare of his people; and though the congregation is not yet large for the population, we learn it has considerably increased during his ministry.

We may here mention that in the cathedral, where Mr Boe now preaches, the meek and immortal Leighton uttered his burning words of truth and love. During the brief reign of Episcopacy in Scotland he associated with Dunblane the lustre of his name, and at his death bequeathed his library to the clergy of the diocese.

We have heard Mr Boe spoken of as a preacher in very favourable terms, in parishes adjoining the one which is the scene of his labours.

REV. FERGUS FERGUSON,

BLACKFRIARS STREET, GLASGOW.

THE subject of our sketch is one of the youngest clergymen of Glasgow, and the pastor of a numerous congregation. Without the aid of act of Parliament, or act of Presbytery, or of any civil or ecclesiastical body, he has gathered around him in less than four years above a thousand people, who are ardently attached to his person and ministrations. Nor has he raised his congregation from the ruins of any other. He has collected them from all quarters of the city, and from various grades of society. In Blackfriars street chapel there may be seen a young man of boyish appearance ministering in the midst of a crowded congregation—a congregation formally connected with no other, and entirely under his own management and control. This is an interesting phenomenon, and naturally leads a philosophic mind to inquire the cause. In our city not a few clergymen, armed with all possible legal and ecclesiastical authority, minister to comparatively empty pews, while here we have a young man unsanctioned by any body, politic or ecclesiastical, severed from those with whom he formerly associated, leaving college and the theological hall, and commencing single-handed to preach to those who choose to come to hear him, now in a great measure, affecting the character and wielding the destinies of a thousand of his fellow men. We have often warned our readers not to judge the value of one's ministrations solely from the fact of his popularity. In a large city like this, any adventurer who will procure his hearers something new or strange, will not fail to find followers. To collect a crowd is one of the most easy processes imaginable.

One person boasts that he filled a street with a crowd by merely bending down and looking into a grating on the common-sewer. We have seen a crowded audience collected in our city to look on an apostle of the Mormon delusion. There is scarcely a faith so absurd, nor a novelty so outrageous, as not to find a home in our hospitable city. Many account for the popularity of the subject of our sketch on the same principles. Had he turned up his heels in the pulpit, or spoken in unknown tongues, these suppose his success had been as great as it is. We are not about to deny that novelty has anything to do with the matter, nor are we to estimate the exact influence that public sympathy may be in his favour; but we are about to say that Mr Ferguson would be a popular preacher in any denomination, wholly independent of his peculiar doctrines or ecclesiastical views. With a voice clear, musical, and well modulated—with a manner, animated, graceful, and easy—with a confidence that never deserts him, and a command of language and figure seemingly inexhaustible, he would collect an audience in Glasgow suppose he professed the faith of Vishnu, or did homage to Mahomet. They greatly mistake who attribute the success of a new sect to the novelty of their views. In every case the founders of sects have been men of great strength and vigour of mind, or of great power and pathos as speakers; and the subject of our sketch is not an exception. But while we have no doubt that he would be popular in connection with any church, and that he would fill even the Ram's-Horn or the Gorbals Church, we are not sure but his popularity is to a considerable extent augmented by his doctrinal and ecclesiastical views. In a large city like Glasgow, there are always as many hyper-Calvinistic preachers as are sufficient to create more than one congregation of semi-Armenians. In this, as in other cases, extremes meet. The five famous Calvinistic points have only to be preached unguardedly to create in many minds their negation. In their horror against doctrines which reduce men to machines, they at once adopt doctrines which are in some danger of making the human will supreme, and the Divine subordinate. Besides, the world is so far impenetrable, that if any one assert any one thing not palpably absurd to be true, about one-fifth of men

will believe it. The man who will allege that clergymen generally do not preach the true doctrines of apostles, and that he alone presents to his hearers the unadulterated truth which has been hid from ages, will always get some one to believe him, and not a few will believe that they are safe for both worlds, just because they believe his allegations. It is, however, to be observed, that to keep such together in the form of a congregation requires no little tact and talent. Their initiative faith is greater than their knowledge, and hence the difficulty to make future acquisitions tally with first impressions. The more successful way is to gradually allow first impressions to retire into the back ground, and present something more tangible and real in the foreground. A thinking man cannot be long edified with a negative. He may satisfy himself for a little with the thought that he is free of what ruins others, but an empty stomach may prove as certain death as a poisoned system. Nor will Scotchmen be fed long with feeble exotics—they must have substantial fare, else they cease to live. The knowledge of this has led the subject of our sketch to deal latterly more in substantial realities than in well-sounding novelties. Anacreon's lyre, that would sing one subject only, does not suit the men and women of Glasgow; and hence, while he occasionally treats his audience to a little of the exclusive and peculiar, he generally just gives them what other preachers present to their people—the bread of life that came down from heaven. He may occasionally handle the lyre that sounds only of love, but he also plays skilfully on the instrument of many strings. In order to get a fair view of his teachings, we selected a time when he delivered a lecture in a usual course. One may select texts which can be the foundation of a favourite theme, but if he proceeds regularly through a book with an expository course, the text determines the subject, if hermeneutics are at all respected. On Sabbath morning week he lectured on Heb. x. 24th to 29th inclusive. The passage reads:—"And let us consider one another," &c., to the words, "and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

He commenced by saying that the apostle in this chapter passes from the didactic to the hortatory, from the doctrinal to the practical. He had proved the superiority of the Chris-

tian over the Mosaic dispensation, and had now reached the practical part of his subject. He had urged upon the Hebrews, in the verses preceding our text, two exhortations. The first was in the 22d verse, where he recommends the Hebrews to draw near to God with full assurance, and the other in the 24th verse, where he urges them to hold fast their profession. Those only can pray who possess true and sincere hearts—who have no doubt of the truth and certainty of the promises of God. In the first verse (the 24th) now to be discussed, we have another exhortation. "Since," says the apostle, "such are our position and privileges, let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works." We have a similar injunction in Philip. ii. 4. This exhortation does not urge us to indulge a fault-finding and censorious spirit. It can do no good to another to tell his faults and blazon them abroad; but it does good when we tell the brother himself of his faults, and thus save his soul from hell. The apostle adds, "to provoke one another to love and to good works." The word "provoke," as now used, means to irritate, but here it means to excite. The word Paul uses is strong. It means paroxysm, and hence the idea is to excite to a paroxysm of love and good works. Some tell us that excitement in religion is dangerous, but the apostle appears before us as the advocate of a "paroxysm." Of course excitement without a foundation in the mind is evil, but on an intellectual foundation it is of great benefit. Those who know the truth are to stimulate the zeal of each other—excite to mutual love—the love of the brethren. Worldly men hate each other's prosperity. The 26th verse contains another reason why Christians should be thus careful. "If we sin wilfully," &c. I think that this must refer to true Christians, and not, as some think, to merely nominal believers. In fact, the words cannot refer to any but Christians, for these the apostle is addressing. He is also warning them against the final apostacy of believers. The sinning wilfully cannot mean an ordinary act of transgression, for every sin is wilful, and no man lives and sins not, and therefore this would unchristianise all believers. The reference here is to final apostacy—the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour. For such the apostle does not say there is no more

forgiveness, but no more *sacrifice*. The words merely mean that if Christians apostatise from Christ there is no other saviour. Nothing remains for an apostate but a fearful looking for of judgment. This does not mean that such look for judgment, but merely that there is nothing else before them. Some smile at the statements of the Bible which speak of endless punishment. Let such dread their future doom. There is nothing between you, my hearers, and fiery indignation but the blood of Christ. If you are not abiding in Christ I would not be in your condition for a thousand worlds. The little thread of life has only to be snapped, and you are gone! Observe in this passage how salvation is to be obtained—by the knowledge of the truth. Here we have that stated which saves a man from hell—not works of righteousness which we can do, but the knowledge of the truth—the truth regarding the sacrifice of Christ. Do you wish to be saved?—you need not to pray and to put forth effort for justification, but to receive the truth. Observe here the prominence given to the sacrifice of Christ. Nothing is between men and destruction but the sacrifice of Christ, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He that despised Moses' law, adds Paul, died without mercy. The reference here is to Deuteronomy 13th, where we are told that persons who rejected the Mosaic dispensation were to be put to death. This was done not on the testimony of one but of two or three witnesses. This is still observed in our own law—two witnesses being necessary to convict. Of how much sorcer punishment, says the apostle, is he worthy who rejects Christ, inasmuch as the Christian is greater than the Mosaic dispensation? The term "worthy" applies both to reward and punishment. The high crime charged against apostates is that of trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting that blood an unholy thing. Sacrificial blood was deemed holy, because it was the blood of animals set apart. But the man who rejects Christ counts his blood no better than the blood of a bull or a goat. Some have profanely said that they expect no more from the blood of Christ than they would from the blood of a cow or of a sheep. Such trample on the blood of Christ. Such a sinner counts the blood with which *he* was sanctified—not Christ but him-

self—an unholy thing; and does despite to the Spirit of grace. Surely the apostle thought that a believer might apostatise. It was possible to apostatise from the law of Moses, for some did so, and were punished. So is it possible to apostatise from the Christian dispensation and endure an awful punishment in the world to come—the agony of hell—ever dying, and never dead. How awful for those who have been professing Christians to reach that place!—and how awful to refuse the gospel and die in sin! If you reach hell it will be by wading through the blood of Christ—a sanguine stream. Blood must be sprinkled on you unto salvation, or you must tread on blood to destruction. Learn here that the blood of Christ is shed for all. If men are punished for trampling on that blood, and if men are saved and made happy in heaven, through the same blood, does it not follow that there is now blood for all, and equally for all? Then be of good cheer, your sins may be forgiven you. There is a Saviour for you—there is also a Holy Ghost to enlighten you—a great moral power to be exercised in you. Beware of despising and quenching that Spirit. Were I to tell you that you cannot believe, and that you must wait for the operations of this Spirit, you would go away pleased; but during your waiting time your souls might be lost. I tell you, however, that all things are now ready, and the Spirit among the rest. Beware of rejecting him, else that Spirit, at the last day, will testify against you.

The discourse was over at 27 minutes past 12, having occupied 57 minutes.

The preceding discourse contains a critical and popular discussion of a very difficult passage. The greater part of what was said is in accordance with generally received views of the passage. On the doctrine of election, though that word was wisely unmentioned, the views of the preacher were plain, and are held by a large body of Christians, from Armenius downwards. According to this discourse Christians may apostatise, and perish. On this he was most decided. The apostle was addressing real Christians, and spoke of real Christians, when he pronounced the doom of apostates. We merely mention the fact, without opposing it to the doctrine of perseverance as stated in the Bible and in sectional creeds. We think it was

also evident that the preacher holds the belief that Christ will reign personally on earth, and that his coming is at hand. With the exception of these views there is almost nothing in the discourse contrary to what is deemed evangelical and orthodox doctrine. His criticisms, in general, were acute and accurate—his reasoning clear, and his language unmistakeable. The discourse was altogether above the average of pulpit productions. It betrayed great clearness of thought and great profusion of illustration. The reasoning was more remarkable for its lucidity than for its strength. The arguments brought forward were good, but sometimes not the best. For instance, when speaking of the sorcer punishment the contemners of Christ would obtain, he gave, as a reason, that the Christian was a greater dispensation than that of Moses. True, but the greater reason is in the person of Christ. Moses was but a servant, but Christ was the Son, and it is his rejection, as indeed the preacher afterwards showed, that constitutes the greater guilt.

The preacher has a flowing, popular style. Sometimes he says what those of severer taste might avoid, and yet it is a question how far these things might not take effect on some minds. In the preceding discourse there is rather too much of "hell" and "hell fire." Those preachers who keep their hearers most in the presence of that place find it soon ceases to frighten. The only way to do away all fears of future wrath is to talk much of it in harsh phraseology. The talk of "hell, where devils dwell," soon ceases to harrow the souls who hear it. Like every other strong dose it soon ceases to operate. But there are sayings in the sermon that are palpably objectionable. To speak of the "blood of Christ and the blood of a cow," is quite out of the question. Nor does it mend the matter to put such sayings into the mouths of scoffers. The very repetition of such statements, in the presence of an audience, displays alike bad policy and bad taste. Many would never hear, and never be corrupted by such sayings, did they not hear them from the pulpit. The saying of "wading through Christ's blood to hell" is also bad. It carries out the figure greatly too far. The Scripture never speaks of the blood of Christ as a stream or as a river. It speaks of it as possessing

a healing and a cleansing virtue, but in such a way that its introduction connects it directly with the Saviour. It is used as the symbol of his merit and atonement, and not as an external application. Such subjects should be spoken of in Scripture phrase. The man who has felt the virtue of the atonement ought to be careful how he speaks of it. But there was comparatively little in the discourse to offend the charest taste. In general the speaker employs neat and nervous phrasology. He has evidently cultivated the communicative art with assiduity and success. His enunciation is distinct and sweet—his pronunciation correct and elegant—his delivery rapid, yet impressive—his gestures animated—and his entire appearance highly creditable. Let none, then, suppose that crowds gather around this preacher solely on account of the peculiarity of his views and of his position. His teachings, were they delivered from the slight blemishes stated, would do credit to any pulpit in the city. Eccentricity and extravagance may amuse for a time, but they will not long sustain attention, and those who suppose that these are the only attractions of Blackfriars Street Chapel, would do well to go there and unlearn and learn. Of his peculiar ecclesiastical views this is not the place for discussion. He, and many other good men, will gradually find out that they have magnified the points wherein they differ from others greatly more than they deserve, and that they have lost sight too much of the great essentials that unite all Christians in one. Those who preach Christ's atonement as the objective cause of salvation, and Christ's Spirit as the subjective and instrumental cause, need not separate on minor points.

Mr Ferguson was born in Glasgow in 1825—brought up in the neighbourhood of Hamilton, and educated in the grammar school of that town. He studied at the University of Glasgow for six sessions, obtaining there thirteen prizes in the classical and philosophical departments. He attended the Glasgow Theological Academy under Dr Wardlaw for one session, and finished his theological course under Mr Morison of Kilmarnock.

The Congregational Church over which Mr Ferguson is now placed, was formed in the Trades' Hall in 1844, to the

pastorate of which he was ordained in 1845. It consists of about 600 members. Two churches have already been formed from it, one in Glasgow and another in the village of Eaglesham. The Trades' Hall not being large enough for the congregation, they removed in June, 1845, to the chapel in which they at present meet.

We are unable to speak as to the liberality of the congregation; but it certainly lacks one feature of Christian justice if it does not bestow a liberal income on him under whose auspices it has been collected, and by whom it is so zealously and faithfully tended.

He has written the Memoir of one of his hearers, and also a treatise on Peace with God; but, though they are both juvenile efforts, they give promise of something better yet to come.

August 11, 1849.

NOTE.—In sketching another preacher who holds peculiar views, the following introductory remarks were made, and we subjoin them because they contain not a little of the philosophy of the new-view tactics:—

Increasing intelligence has dissipated much of the marvellous and mysterious which characterised darker days. Men are no longer alarmed with fresh appearances of departed spirits or other inhabitants of the invisible world. Yet man still possesses the organ of wonder, and many feel an intense desire to have it gratified. Ignorance will generally be found to associate with the marvellous, and in the same degree. A well-informed, intelligent man can scarcely be astonished; and, on the other hand, in times like these, which teem with discoveries and change, an ignorant man is kept constantly on the stretch after some new thing. He who having been brought up in an obscure place, where he has seen little but hills and valleys, sunshine and storm, morning and evening, when suddenly removed to such a city as this, is lost in wonder. Everything wears to him the stamp of the marvellous. That which the citizens would never think of bestowing a look on, rivets his attention and calls forth his astonishment. The abode he resides in appears at first very splendid—the people he mingles with very superior. He is delighted with his associates, and speedily forms connections, some transitory and others permanent. For a time he fancies himself in an Elysium. He is pleased with everything and every one. By and by he finds his tastes and his likings are changing. He ceases to marvel at the objects which recently commanded his admiration. He could even despise them, did not that indicate a degree

of falsehood which he chooses not to acknowledge. He, however, quietly abandons many of the objects which had appeared to him superexcellent, and only respects he cannot abdicate them all.

The change which local instruction produces is not greater than a change from a state of ignorance to a state of intelligence. When a man who has spent his early days in obscurity and ignorance opens his eyes on the regions of the intellectual and philosophical, everything astounds and amazes him. Things appear not in their true colours, or proportions, or worth, but all wear the stamp of beauty, grandeur, and perfection. It is evident that this is to mark the most important period of their lives. The powers of the mind have been aroused, and require direction—the mind thirsts for knowledge; but it will receive poison as readily as wholesome food—its taste requires to be formed—its powers to be balanced—its judgment to be enlightened, and its affections and feelings to be chastened and improved. It is apt to call evil good, and good evil; to put darkness for light, and light for darkness. It is more inclined to marvel than to learn, and to talk than to hear. It is in this state that men are most apt to err intellectually and religiously. They pronounce rash judgments, and betray a spirit not very favourable to the acquisition of accurate knowledge. They have got hold of half a dozen ideas, and they are immediately wiser than both ancients and moderns. Some theory or argument they pronounce perfect, which has been discussed, and found wanting, by men of taste and judgment. They consider they have made a discovery, when they merely admire some hackneyed idea which has served discoverers in almost every age since the world began. Such will have it that they are decided discoverers, though they walk in paths trodden till they are very common and not very choice. Yet one has little heart to blame the hearty admiration in which these hold old and very hackneyed ideas. To them they appear new, beautiful, and all-important. It matters not whether the study which these individuals pursue is secular or sacred—both departments teem with marvels to the inexperienced, and many an enraptured youth, in his great haste, alien himself to some theory, and adheres to it long after its beauty is gone, and after it appears very common and very desppicable. In the sublime walk of theology, our remarks find thousands of illustrations. So imposing and magnificent are its facts and doctrines, that even their clumsy counterfeits command the faith and homage of the ill-informed. As they commence to explore its vast territories, they make very extraordinary discoveries, and raise the cry "I have found," frequently and loudly. It is to no purpose the more experienced tell such that they have found only what men of research and intelligence have thrown away as worthless and pernicious—they adhere to it with all the fondness of discoverers, and with all the fervour of first love, and defend it as long as their knowledge is limited and their judgment partially enlightened. They have come to the vast mines which contain unsearchable riches, but they mistake rubbish for precious ore, and designing men are there who declare that to be gold which is a miserable counterfeit. They fancy all is gold that glitters, till time shows them that in their haste to collect stores they have collected much trash, which has only burdened, without bettering them. Yet who will deny that there is much of the interesting in this state of mind? Who but admires the stomach to which all meats come alike, and that can even digest poison without being seriously damaged? Who is not delighted to see a poor man satisfied

with very common fare, and who will be angry with him should he even mistake a stone for bread? Who need be angry to see one compassing himself with sparks of his own kindling, when they know the sparks will speedily be quenched? Who will blame an earnest man because he is mistaken, or an ignorant man, provided he is on the high way to knowledge? A child must have his toys for a little, and by and by time will cure him of his likings for them, and even those beyond the stature of children are sometimes loath to put away their childish things.

Without meaning the slightest disrespect to the originators of new sects or new views, we must state that they generally make their discoveries when in the state of mind indicated by the above remarks. They are generally emerging from a state of comparative ignorance, and in their haste to obtain knowledge they neglect to discriminate between the certain and the doubtful—the true and the false. Often, obsolete ideas appear to them new and imposing. They really believe the Christian world is in a state of darkness, because not rejoicing in the pretty sparks they are emitting. The world is perishing, because it will not sail in their newly-discovered barque. Ministers preach not the gospel, because they preach not perpetually their theories. In all this there is much to amuse, and not a little to admire. There is downright honesty and sincerity, and who would not forgive the mistake and presumption? There is the impetuosity of first love, and who would frown on the object, even though it should not be particularly amiable? They may not believe the true the less because they also believe the false. They may find their way to heaven, even with a great load of crotchetts on their backs.

The excess of wonder these possess, operates very effectively, objectively as well as subjectively. When they become teachers, as they still retain a dash of the marvellous, all the marvellers in the world are at their heels, expecting to hear some new thing. They may not hear anything extraordinary, but they live in hope, and delight themselves with the thought that they enjoy a very clear dispensation of the gospel. They are the true Israelites, with light in their dwellings, when the whole ecclesiastical world is buried in Egyptian darkness.

REV. JAMES STEWART,

METH-OF-AGE

A vigorous mind will not rest satisfied with a circumscribed field of exercise. It will not be hedged in by prescribed bounds, and feel satisfied in being told that all beyond is profane and barren. Feeble minds spurn the means by which they might naturally acquire some degree of strength, and, imagining themselves great, they swell about with pompous pride, until some accidental circumstance exposes their weakness, and they immediately sink into the ranks of the unknown. On the other hand, a vigorous energetic mind has the power of discovering its weakness. It feels the necessity for a thorough acquaintance with matters of general knowledge, and goes out to gather from every quarter whatever is calculated to preserve its health and augment its vigour. It knows no limits, and the farther it proceeds it feels renewed impulses to press on. Thus it accumulates resources, and feels at all times prepared for action, whether it be in distinguishing the real from the spurious, sense from sophistry, or in confirming the truth by exhibiting it in its unassailable and most attractive and resistless positions. Such are the minds that lead on and improve the world in all its varied pursuits. Without these humanity would be at a stand still. One generation would be content to retain all the faults, failings, and prejudices of the preceding, and as mankind increased in number, so would they doubly increase in misery. If this mental activity be so essential in the minor pursuits of life, how much more so in those which tend to man's everlasting weal or woe! Ignorance on the part of those who are spiritual guides and instructors, even

of the affairs of this life, although it cannot sully the cause, will render them but feeble instruments for good, however intense their zeal may be. The subject of our present sketch has been most persevering and successful in his endeavours to furnish his mind with such materials as may give interest, unction, and dignity to his ministrations. Some preachers object to make use of the words of such men as Byron, Campbell, or Scott, but he seems to be of opinion that truth is truth wherever found, or by whoever uttered, and allows no prejudice to interfere with him in his researches after it.

On Sabbath the 26th ult., the subject of our sketch officiated in St Enoch's Church of this city. The following was the text:—Psalm ciii. 19, "His kingdom ruleth over all." After some introductory remarks regarding the nature and extent of the universe, the preacher went on to notice objections frequently urged against an all-powerful and all-wise Deity. First—Many objects and events are so minute as to be beneath the notice of an omnipotent Deity. While we gaze upon the fields of space we see but a part of that universe. It deepens beyond, and other worlds begin where human vision ends. After allowing our minds to roam far beyond the range of our bodily eyes, we return again to feel all our littleness. Although God is ever rolling in his palm new worlds, and bowling them throughout the fields of space, yet the hairs of our head are all numbered. You can realise God shrouding the world in darkness, but you can scarcely realise him in the minutiae of his works. Great, small, little, and large, vanish altogether in the eye of the Infinite. What appears great to an insect, will appear much less to a man; and what appears great to a man, to an angel may appear but a point. Little and large to higher intelligences are modified. Admit that God cares for a world, and you admit that he cares for an atom. The vast and minute are alike to God; a world and an atom are alike to God; and hence, if Providence descends not to the insect it descends not to the world. The tidal motion and the smallest circle are alike directed by Providence. The heaving of nations tell of a God that ruleth, and all the little movings of my life bear evidence to me as strong of the power of God. Another objection is chance.

Things appear to be drifting across the world at random—now a calm, now a storm. In the morning we see a beautifully smiling city—by night the earthquake has transformed it into a smoking ruin. As in the physical, so in the moral world—to-day feeling and resolving to pursue one object—to-morrow another fleeting change comes over us, as if man were the very football of caprice and jest. But no; all is in subjection to established laws. The hurricane accumulates gradually by a sure and regular train of events before it bursts. Vapours have been collecting, and many secret energies have been at work before the volcano bursts forth. All these are the result of certain fixed and determined laws. As the knowledge of the laws of nature advances among men so will the doctrine of chance disappear—mental, moral, as well as natural laws. The laws of nature are the providence of God. Another objection is—undeserved punishment, indiscriminate misery. The holiest and best of our race often fall into sin. When the mind is enslaved and sorely perplexed then we feel distrustful of an all-ruling Power. But it is only a small part of God's plan we can see. The parts by which we judge are unconnected parts. Could we see them in all their bearings, what a flood of light would then appear! We see but in part, and that is the cause of our ignorance. But a more positive answer could be given. God trieth the heart as the pot for the silver. God is trying whether we keep his commandments or no. Amid the deep garment of darkness in which God frequently wraps himself we must live by faith. It would require no faith in God if all was clear. When around there is seeming reason to say that all is dark, then is the time for faith to expand and consolidate itself, &c.

After praise and prayer the church was dismissed at a quarter to one o'clock.

In the afternoon the preacher gave out for text 1st Cor. xv. 12—18, the subject being Christ's resurrection. He commenced by saying—Suppose I wish to give you an idea of the sun I might tell you of its brightness—I might tell you of its beams penetrating every nook and corner of the world—I might speak of the genial heat acting upon creation, and quickening into life the innumerable varieties of the vegetable

world. In this way I might make an impression on your minds of the nature of the sun. But there is another way. I might sketch a picture of the value of the sun by the absence of stars—I might speak of the world swinging black in the icy air—I might tell how men would come and go—how they would shrink and shiver in the lightless air—I might tell how beasts would leave their dens, and trust themselves among men harmless—how the world would become unpeopled—rivers, streams, and oceans, standing still, and this world of life become a huge lump of death floating in the black universe. This would be the more powerful picture. The black would make a deeper impression than the bright. There is a central truth as well as a central sun. The Saviour's resurrection might have been described as the first—the apostle draws so dark a picture of what is to follow if Christ be not risen. Instead of attempting any elaborate description of Christ's resurrection, let us follow out the apostle. If Christ be not risen there is no faith in human testimony—the world is one vast region of scepticism. I need not tell you that the apostles surrendered their lives rather than belie their convictions. If no faith is to be put in the death of Christ, what fact in the recorded annals of other times can we believe? Deny Christ's resurrection, and you deny the past. The past is a delusion—all the heroes and heroic deeds are a huge lie. The pall of a universal scepticism lies upon the past. If it be not true that Christ has risen, history is not authentic—it is all a lie. The great argument for a future life is our Lord's resurrection. If Christ be not risen, all other events are the offspring of a distempered vision. The hope of a future life is quenched for ever, and our fathers are only a heap of dust. The slumber of the great is an eternal sleep, and faith, hope, and love, are chimeras of a distempered brain. Threescore and ten years, and man dies as the brute dies! Dark is the future—death only is reality! If we cannot tear up our expectations of a future life, then we believe that Christ has risen—the bonds that connect them are indissoluble; cut them, and all is past. If we deny Christ's resurrection there is no reward for the good—none can be more wretched than the Christian. Follow the throng through the fires of persecution. How evils run

thick upon them!—The furnace heated—the stake prepared and lighted. Mark them in the caves and dens of the earth—on mountains and moors—kneeling on the turf before the death engines of their persecutors! What a miserable picture, if Christ be not risen! God and truth are a lie—morality a cheat—eating and drinking the source of happiness—and there is no reward for virtue. Again, there is no authority to compel to duty, if Christ be not risen. The exhortation of the apostle has no authority. The resurrection of Christ was said by Christ himself to be the test of the future resurrection. Let it be supposed that Christ is not risen, and you see the consequences. Secret sin would have no restraint. The authority of Christ gives power to all his commands, and brings the high sanctions of heaven to check immorality. Woe unto the world, when the satisfactions experienced here are all the reward for the good! Woe, woe! for the hour is come. Again, It takes away all hope of the pardon of sin. The curse still lies on the earth—there is no pathway to the holiest above—the darkness of apostacy lies beneath. The denier of Christ's resurrection must consent to a life of brute labour, and when finished his existence is closed. If such denial sets aside all human testimony, it robs the soul of its moral life, strips the good man of his recompense, and consigns saint and sinner to one undistinguished tomb, leaving the only motive to obedience to the mind's caprice. I leave you, then, to conclude what can be the possible aim, and what may not be the consequences, of such denial.

These are but meagre outlines of the day's discourses, yet they give an idea of the preacher's style. They may be said to be a kind of blank verse—the sentences short but expressive. There was a very successful attempt at the grand and poetical, which, if it did not reach the calm and majestic grandeur with which Milton paces through the realms of imagination, approximated that splendour in which Thomson sometimes exhibits and dignifies his subject. In listening to him his hearers feel themselves transported far away from the everyday world, travelling through the starry fields of space, contemplating the sudden flash quiver through the sultry air; or if, descending to the earth, it is to feel themselves amid hurri-

canes, earthquakes, and volcanoes, and all that rare and sublime phenomena which but seldom present themselves to the eyes of mortals. He is more a decorator of popular ideas than a creator or producer of the new. He adorns whatever he touches with festoons of flowers culled from every quarter of the natural and intellectual world. The forenoon's discourse was purely metaphysical, yet it was metaphysics arranged in holiday attire—metaphysics designed for the ear and imagination more than an unbending severe appeal to the understanding. The afternoon's discourse is merely an amplification of the apostle's reasoning on the resurrection of Christ. It too was highly, richly, and elaborately decorated with fine imagery—in some instances so profuse as to conceal what it meant to illustrate. The preacher's style is most chaste, and he is one of the most popular of our preachers. At present there is occasional repetition—a redundancy of imagery to illustrate one idea. This renders the discourse less attractive than it otherwise might be. Occasionally there is an approach to the inflated. The preacher evidently spares no labour in the compilation of his discourses, but, in working them up to his own feelings and ideas, he is apt to forget that they are intended for a promiscuous audience, and hence they are sometimes more elegant than instructive, though the preacher has evidently resources to make them as instructive as they are elegant.

The subject of our sketch appears to be about thirty years of age, of the middle height. His brow is lofty, his features regular and pleasing, and his light sunny hair harmonises well with his pale complexion. His voice is powerful and solemn, admirably calculated to impress a popular audience. At the commencement of the services he exhibits much of the manner of Dr Candlish. His opening prayer was a beautiful and appropriate iteration of scriptural sentiments, and displayed the texture of the preacher's mind as completely as did the whole day's services. He seems to be intimately acquainted with general literature, more especially with poetry, and he has the power of gathering around his text all that is elegant in thought and language, so that his discourses blaze like a firmament of stars. We do not think that the preacher's mind has much of a plastic or creative character, but it delights to revel amid the creations

of lofty minds. As we have said, this circumstance makes his discourses too gorgeous, for not a few feel a longing for some shady place whereon to rest—some great rock to shelter them from the heat. It is likely that a few years will considerably cool his poetical fervour, and he will settle down into the real and practicable. The great aim of preaching is to enlighten, and though a congregation may appreciate a highly-laboured poetical diction, the preacher would do well to study simplicity, collecting his imagery and illustrations from things common and well known, and presenting them in language distinct and clear. Two or three poetical outbursts interspersed throughout a good practical sermon will create a much higher feeling of the sublime than a whole discourse made up of dazzling imagery. It is seldom, indeed, we feel necessity to quarrel with preachers because of their being too bright, the difficulty is to find them bright enough. There are many who consider themselves of no common stamp who would be greatly benefitted by a few sparks from Mr Stewart's highly-charged battery, and he none the worse of his loss.

SEPTEMBER 8, 1849.

[Since the above was written Mr Stewart has been twice removed. He was first removed from St George's-in-the-Fields, Glasgow, to Newton-on-Ayr, and shortly afterwards to Moffat, where he labours with great acceptance.—ED.]

R E V. W. K. T W E E D I E,

FREE CHURCH, EDINBURGH.

EXTERNAL circumstances have great influence in calling forth and heightening the devotional feelings. Who has ever taken an evening stroll through any of the glades or dells of our native land, when its tiny brooks sparkled with a thousand tints, and when every interstice of its canopy of leafy branches was pierced by an arrow of the sun, and when every venerable stem threw its broad shadow far across the verdant sward—who has ever stood by the seaside when the harbingers of day were streaming round the horizon in long palpitating shafts of light, or in the evening when the retiring lord of the day formed a flaming avenue through the heaving waters, and imparting to every wavelet a portion of his radiance—who ever surveyed from mountain pinnacles the expanding magnitude of the works of God and the diminishing importance of man and his works—without feeling, as it were, his soul taking to itself wings and soaring away to some purer region which the bodily eye could not perceive, and the peculiarities of which the imagination could not invest with forms? This land of the soul the heathen characterised as the dwelling of the gods. Similar feelings are awakened by the spacious dimensions, the gigantic pillars, and the broad masses of alternating light and shadow that meet our eye while pacing through the aisle of some grand cathedral. But while such scenes tend to excite feeling and heighten devotion, they do but little to elevate man in the scale of intelligence. Devotion and ignorance are perfectly incompatible, and the church that attributes great importance to ceremonials may expect larger numbers of ignorant

devotees than of enlightened adherents. Nature everywhere is a shrine, but the church is, or ought to be, a school where man's reason is always to have the precedence of his feelings—where he is to be taught to perceive the true relationships between himself and fellows, between man and the universe, and between all things and God. It is not until he has to a considerable degree attained this that external nature has meaning, and his devotions an intelligent aim. There are no “sermons in stones” to an ignorant man, nor is there good in anything unconnected with his passions. No man can be pure in heart until his mind be enlightened, and the pure in heart only can see God in the materials with which He has built up this world and garnished the skies. When the church, then, comes to be a showroom of dresses and attitudes, types and forms, or when it comes to be a place for reciting poetry (as some in these days would have it), then it must be classed with other places of amusement, and become the resort of mewling sentimentalists. It is then no longer a church, and ought to be despised by all men sufficiently robust not “to die of a rose, in aromatic pain.” The life of Christianity is intrinsic, not extrinsic. It matters not where it may be taught—whether on the hillside or in the cathedral—whether in the cottage or in the palace. It has to do with the understandings of men, not with their ears and eyes. It is as stern as time, and as durable as eternity; and thankful we are that Scotland, for the last three hundred years, has had preachers that knew this, and has them still. Though there are some who wish to see the leather-bound “big ha' Bible” take the character of a modern album with its pretty scraps and bits of ribbon, we trust their number is but few and their influence not very extensive. When we find a minister earnest in his work, and maintaining with becoming dignity the doctrines of the cross, we shall always have something to say in his favour, even though he should not be a Knox, or a Whitefield, or a Chalmers, regardless of all the sneers which conceit and flippancy can mumble. We have been led into this strain by the circumstances in which the following discourse was preached on the morning of a recent Sabbath. The temple was no other than a large dingy storeroom at the Glasgow and Southwestern Railway

Station. The few small openings called windows, though aided by a number of gas lights, were sufficient only to light up portions of the large audience then assembled; but the preacher is a man of sense and sound words, and their effects were in no degree marred by the locality. After praise and prayer had been engaged in, the 130th Psalm was read and made the subject of some excellent remarks. Contrary to the common practice prayer was a second time offered, after which Mr T. gave out as text Exodus xxxiii. 18, "And he (Moses in his prayer to God) said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory."

- He commenced by saying—

That we may here inquire, What prompted this strange petition? Was it the ignorance of Moses that urged him to what cannot be attained, or a knowledge of the essence of God? Was it something to excite the feelings? or was he directed by the urgings of a holy soul—or one that thought nothing could make him glad but God? The latter was what moved Moses to make the petition—the knowledge he had of the true God. It was not the office of a lawgiver, nor the power he possessed, that would satisfy his mind. The desire of his heart was towards God, for there he could find repose and joy. We may now offer this prayer just as Moses did; nay, we cannot help offering it if we have learned the insufficiency of the creature, and that God alone can make us blessed. But whatever may have prompted it, it deserves our study. Let us, first, Consider how this prayer may be answered in your case and mine. Let me first remark, however, that if there be some amongst us that have no desire to know God, as to take no interest in Jehovah's glory, these are they on whom the Holy Spirit's teaching has so little effect that they feel but little concerning him; but what shall we say of one who feels no interest in the glory of God? Let us all, with heart and soul, give attention to this subject. In answering the question, What is meant by God's glory? I remark, 1st, The reply is contained in a verse in the New Testament—"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." No man knoweth the Father; but he who is the brightness of the Father's glory can make

the Father known, &c. But the question here naturally arises—As God is unchanging, may he not be unchanging to condemn? Had I not the gospel I could not answer this. Every mourning household we see, every funeral, every grave, and every pang, bodily or mental, proclaim that God is terrible in his doings to the children of men; and had we nothing but reason to guide us we could not answer. But the gospel points out another ray—His love. Under this we comprehend mercy, goodness, pity, &c. There are two aspects in which this may be viewed. 1. The love of the Lord Jesus Christ, exhibited in the gospel, was love to sinners, not to penitent persons. Christ died for the ungodly. When we lay polluted with sin, and deserved death, God said, Live. If you can stretch your minds back through the past eternity, that ray will wear a wondrous lustre. It was love to men polluted, to whom the thoughts of Jehovah turned. 2. This glory is displayed by the channel through which it has reached us. That our race might not be ~~done~~, his Son was sent, and a new moral element was introduced into our world. Let us consider it in its bearing on the individual soul in this manner. It was manifested to those who rebelled against God, and that is just my character; and if the love of God was displayed to the ungodly I rank among that number. If I had been among the godly I could not have expected it; but, not being this, Christ died for the ungodly, and my soul may yet be saved, and the love of God shed abroad in my heart. Thus we are taken captive by his love. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love;” and may we not thus behold some portion of the length and the breadth, the height and the depth, of the love that passeth all understanding? You will perceive here, if there be any among you under the conviction of sin, the first thought that may occur may be that this heaven is not for me, as I am a sinner. That is the state of conscience before being enlightened by the Holy Ghost, but one should reason otherwise; and let me say, it were worth visiting the other side of the globe if it could be the means of saving one sinner. The taking of what is offered, to the ungodly, changes the character, and old things pass away. 3. Another aspect of the Divine glory is seen in his power. I will not speak of his power displayed in the first

creation, for the Power that created all things out of nothing far transcends our grasp. But there is another creation in which the believer perceives the power of God. If we are believers we know the power of God unto salvation—old things pass away, and all things become new. He has taken us from a fearful pit, &c. That would be a wondrous power that could make the majestic river that runs through your city run upwards, and many people would run to see it; but has something like this not taken place in the case of believers? The sinner would run downwards to destruction and death, but the power of God makes the believer run upwards. He sees signs of his glory in the face of Christ, and this power appears in many ways which the believer only can understand. Is he pained at the remembrance of past sin? God blots out his iniquity. Is he assailed by temptation? The power of God is a bulwark round about him, and he can say, If God be for us who can be against us? This is another ray he can contemplate in the face of Jesus Christ. Thus is the prayer of Moses answered by turning the believer's face upwards. Time would fail me to show you at proper length another exhibition of God's glory—the glory of his justice. All will confess that the love of God in Christ is reconciled with the strictest justice, but justice is sometimes terrible, you may see it is altogether glorious. Does justice hold the balance?—The believer is weighed in the balance, and found complete in Christ. Does justice wear a sword?—In Christ the sword is sheathed. We have to do with justice no doubt, but it is justice satisfied and passing into mercy. The two pillars of the eternal throne are justice and mercy—they are also the pillars of our hope, for it is written, "He is just to forgive us our sins." The sun shines without a cloud in the plan of man's redemption, and I point you to it now that you may comprehend this prayer of Moses. Have you seen this glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, or have you only admired the prayer, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory"? If you seek salvation there you are but building on the sand. Think ye of man? How soon he must pass on to death, and the teeming earth will soon furnish him a grave! Think you of the affections—of the world's applause? The world and its pleasures soon pass away—some casualty happens,

a brute stumbles, and many are hurried to eternity. Let it be written on your heart as with a pen of iron—Nothing on earth can make you happy but God !

Such is a brief outline of the discourse. The preacher did not dwell, as many less substantial, though perhaps more showy, preachers would have done, upon the character of Moses or on the history of the Israelites, but despatched with a few remarks that which connected it with special circumstances, and brought its suggestions to bear on all believers in all ages and in all circumstances. What is the glory of God, how it is displayed, and how men are affected by it as Christians and immortal beings, were the topics of the discourse. It was purely doctrinal, but by no means a sermon made up of dry theological technicalities ; nor was it one drear and dismal, hung round with gloomy drapery or pervaded with a ghostly aspect. It was full of hope and encouragement, and calculated to invite men to be Christians, and to be cheerful and hopeful. It did not represent God as an object of terror, but as a father kind and affectionate, not frowning down from his sapphire throne and willing the destruction of the creatures of his hand, but smiling from his holy habitation and beckoning men thither. Unchangeableness, love, power, and justice were regarded as so many rays issuing from the Godhead, constituting its glory, and promising to the believer security and peace. The framework of the discourse was logically exact, and the illustrations pertinent, clear, and interesting, neither redundant nor lacking as to ideas or language, and careful study was apparent in all its parts. What was addressed to the feelings was given in a few short sentences, yet sentences that spoke to the heart and conscience with infinitely greater effect than those commonplace declamatory appeals with which so many preachers spin out their discourses to a proper, or, what is often the case, an improper length. The preacher evidently possesses a well-balanced and well-cultivated mind, and is intimately acquainted with the Bible. He possesses also what is rarer than many suppose—strong common sense. A little more of this would show some who regard themselves planets of the first magnitude that they are by no means luminous bodies, and if there be anything of a shining nature about

them it is because they are shone upon—satellites and not stars. This preacher is above all petty arts, oddities, or studied flourishes to make himself attractive. If mellifluous tones, graceful action, and neat pronunciation be requisites of an orator, he is not one; and if beating the desk, sparring at the congregation, vociferating, and panting for breath be energy, he cannot be said to be an energetic preacher; but if good preaching consists in sound doctrine, fresh and healthy illustration, terse and clear diction, enunciated with vitality then he is a preacher of more than ordinary ability, and one that cannot fail to knit a congregation more and more closely to him. His sermons are not enthusiastic whirlwinds that raise in their fury a heterogeneous pillar, to the sky, of sand and rubbish and leaves and dust, that fall again to the earth as soon as the fury is past, but have in them something akin to that living serenity which is enjoyed amid hilly scenery in bright summer days—days and scenes that leave an image on the soul, to be cherished in secret, and that ever whisper to us of the greatness and goodness of the Creator. His voice is strong, somewhat harsh, and not very flexible. Every syllable is distinct and abrupt, but there is neither lagging nor hesitation in his utterance. He is not one of those preachers that commence in whispers, and move on slowly for a time, like a locomotive leaving the station and gathering speed as it proceeds—he sets out at once with full power and speed, and maintains them in full vigour to the close. This is the case also in his prayers, and they are characterised by the same mental nerve which is so apparent in his sermons. Judging from his appearance in the pulpit, he seems about fifty years of age, and of the ordinary stature. He is spare but muscular; and though there is in his visage something of an iron firmness, as soon as he begins to speak his expression is that of tenderness and affection. So far as quantity is concerned there appears to be no falling off in his capillary ornament; but a few grey flakes mingling in the dark brown, indicate advancing years.

Mr Tweedie's predominating characteristic as a preacher seems to lie in doctrinal illustration, and to this task he brings to bear a mind naturally robust, a disposition benevolent, and an experience varied and extensive. A few words are framed

so as to suggest much ; and while he neglects not to warn his hearers of the folly and danger of neglecting the things that belong to their peace, he loves to linger on the sunny heights of Zion rather than amid the shadows of the valley of Hin-nom. He is an interesting, unassuming, yet highly instructive, preacher ; and if he be surpassed in brilliancy by some of his brethren, but few of them are his equals in producing permanent effects.

The subject of our sketch was educated at Glasgow University, at Edinburgh University, and St Andrew's. After travelling for a year in the South of Europe, he was settled in the Scotch Church, London Wall, in 1832. He was translated to South Parish Church, Aberdeen, in 1836, and to the Tolbooth Parish Church, Edinburgh, in the spring of 1842, where he has laboured ever since. In co-operation with Dr Chalmers he was Convener of the Sustentation Committee of the Free Church for two or three years, and is now Convener of the Foreign Missions Committee.

He has published a volume on the Atonement ; on Baptism ; on Calvin and Servetus ; the Life of Rev. John Macdonald, Missionary, Calcutta ; and Lessons from the Book of Israel, &c. &c.

He presides over a numerous and affectionate people, who esteem him highly in love for his work's sake.

DECEMBER 21, 1850.

R E V. W M. T H O M S O N,

SLATEFORD, EDINBURGH.

It has often been observed that the mightiest processes and agencies in nature are the least ostentatious, and the least observed. Islands are being built of coral rock, but few have marked their progress. Electricity is circulating around all matter, and exerting the most potent influences, and probably giving motion to the spheres, but seldom is its voice heard unless in the thunder. But for these hidden powers and agencies it is impossible to conceive of any worthy end being answered by creation. The great Creator struggles to make himself visible and intelligible to his rational offspring. All the forms of magnitude and beauty have been assumed to give impressiveness to the perfections of the Invisible God. Nor is creation equal, even with all its forms and varieties of beauty, fully to disclose the greatness and grace of God. In another and higher department he is revealing himself to an intelligent creation. It is not his creating arm—high and powerful as that arm is—it is not the suspension of the material universe in his hand, which gives the chief idea of his greatness—He stands forth before the intelligent universe in dyed garments—He comes from Bozrah, travelling in the greatness of his strength, and calls aloud, so as to make the universe feel to its core the thrilling sentiment, “I am mighty to save.” It is “God manifest in the flesh” that comes home with the greatest effect to the mind and heart of angels and men—not God creating worlds, not God wielding the sceptre, but God struggling to alleviate misery, God striving to restore the alienated, God mighty to save the veriest outcast. What a theme for the

Christian orator! The Creator arrayed as a warrior with garments rolled in blood—travelling in the strength of Deity—meeting the enemies of a happy universe in determined combat, and triumphing over them all in the meanest nature that ever they assailed. This idea was finely brought out by the subject of our sketch, in a discourse delivered by him on Sabbath week, in the United Presbyterian Church, Shamrock street. His text was, Isaiah lxiii. 1—“Mighty to save.” He said,

No laboured argument was needed to prove that the text referred to Christ. This impassioned apostrophe occurs in a series of prophecies, which contains a bold description of Christ and of gospel times. The language outvies the loftiest strains of poetry and eloquence, and can refer only to the struggles and conquests of the Prince of Peace. An inquiry is naturally made why Christ should come from Edom and Bozrah. The language is poetical and mystical, and the scene is in perfect accordance with Hebrew ideas. Idumea was occupied at the time by the bitterest enemies of Israel. In David's reign 18,000 of them were slain, and the land was rendered tributary to Israel, but the people still continued to be opposed to the Jews. They exulted in all the disasters that befell Israel, whom they considered their natural enemies. Hence the prayer—Remember Edom, and raze it to the ground. The prophet in vision here sees one proceeding from Edom with the air and mein of a conqueror: this mysterious personage comes from the ancient capital of Idumea. The description is given to indicate the struggles and the victory of the conqueror. A variety of opinion exists as to the period in the Saviour's history here predicted. Some fix the time between his crucifixion and ascension, while others, probably with more reason, refer it to a time and to events yet to be revealed—those in Rev. xiv. and xix., when the earth will be converted and see God's salvation. That man's position needs a mighty Saviour is obvious. Man is a wayward, alienated, doomed creature, who harbours purposes and passions of rebellion against God—and hence he is said to be “without God and without hope in the world.” He needs pardon, reconciliation, and renovation. He needs faith, holiness, and preservation—safety in death, the

resurrection of his body, glory, honour, and immortality—and growing beauty and blessedness throughout eternity. The redemption of countless millions of such creatures is an undertaking in the contemplation of which all thought is lost. The text may be considered in two aspects—1, As bearing on the case of individual sinners; and, 2, As bearing on the cause and kingdom of Christ at large. We consider, 1st, Its bearing on the case of individual sinners. Christ is mighty to save the sinner. This is a question in which every individual sinner is concerned. The builder considers well the foundation on which he is about to erect a structure—the emigrant makes searching inquiry about the vessel that is to carry him, his family, and his earthly all, to a distant land. He must know if the vessel is sound and sea-worthy, and the crew competent. When he knows all this he can ride on the raging sea with confidence. The storm may rage, but he knows the vessel is in gallant hands, and will reach its destination in safety. So ought it to be with men in regard to salvation. Let us examine this foundation on which we are to build our hopes for eternity. It is to be observed, first, That Christ has been appointed to the work of human redemption. He is set apart by Divine commission to his enterprise; and what king would send an ambassador to restore a rebellious province who did not first satisfy himself of his fitness? The investiture of Christ in his various offices by his Father proves his fitness for his work. God the Father has laid our help on one who is mighty, and the Son has pledged himself to fulfil the work given him to do. But, farther—His Godhead in union with his humanity is the proof and pledge of his being possessed of every requisite. He had to meet the demands of law and justice, and no mere creature, however exalted, was able. It required the union of perfect purity and penal infliction—Godhead with the weakness of man—life indestructible with the capacity to languish and die. No creature possessed these requisites; but the mysterious union of Christ's person furnished him with every requisite. He was a mighty Saviour because he was the mighty God, and also because he was man. But Christ is mighty to save, because he has made an atonement for human guilt, satisfied law and justice. His course

of humiliation was a sacrifice for sin, and prepared the way for communicating eternal life to the guilty. His death must have been viewed at first by demons as their triumph. A gleam of fiendish joy must have flashed across the countenance of the great enemy as the Prince of Life expired—as he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. But their triumph was short—for in dying he destroyed him that had the power of death—he obtained a final victory. The triumph was Christ's—for by that death he laid a foundation on which mercy will be built up for ever. Single-handed and alone the Redeemer triumphed over every foe. O Emmanuel, thou hast a mighty arm! Strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Blessed are the people, &c. Every sinner who believes obtains from Christ a full remission of sin. (The preacher here quoted the case of a dumb boy, and of a chief of Polynesia, who perceived and strikingly expressed this truth.) Farther—Christ is mighty to save, because he possesses official resources sufficient to enable him to overcome every obstacle. His advocacy in heaven is ever prevalent. The sinner who puts his cause in his hand will never be disappointed—he will not urge his case in vain. Our great High Priest has gone into heaven with his own blood. Whatever he asks the Father bestows. He prepares a place for us. He is mighty to procure blessings and mighty to bestow them. The Spirit of all grace is at his disposal, and through him the human heart is changed without doing violence to man's powers or responsibility. He is invested with universal authority in providence as well as in grace. Angels are his messengers, and are sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation. He spoils the powers of darkness, protects his people even in death, and as Judge of all, will acquit and own his people. The work is all his from the first tear of penitence to the last shout of triumph. The second aspect of the text is that which it bears to the kingdom of Christ at large. He is mighty to protect and deliver his church as well as to save the sinner. Many institutions have been founded to elevate and improve man, and many of them have perished, and their founders are forgotten, but Christianity advances, and remains the same, like the vault of heaven that still spans the earth, and remains unchanged amid the

changes of time. Christianity receives no fatal wounds, but gathers fresh strength from every conflict. Even when obscured, as it was before the Reformation during the dark ages, it again bursts forth in its heavenly splendour. In conclusion—The text forms a warrant and encouragement to every sinner to put his trust in Christ. He is the Saviour, and the only Saviour, for there is salvation in none other—no other name given among men whereby they can be saved. Christ is willing to save. He says, “Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.” But remember Christ is able to destroy as well as to deliver. Procrastinate not to a death-bed. (The preacher gave a graphic account of a death-bed scene, and of the unfitness of such a time to seek salvation.) The text farther supplies encouragement to believers to still trust in Christ. Still join with the apostle, and say, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” &c.

In the afternoon he preached on the words “Have faith in God.” The sermon was thought by some even superior to the forenoon; but our space forbids an outline.

The forenoon discourse, of which we have given but a rapid outline, occupied about fifty minutes, and the entire service rather more than an hour and a half. The discourse contains a vast amount of truly excellent matter. The subject is the most important that can occupy a preacher. The all-sufficiency of the Saviour is a topic which ought to obtain a prominent place in every system of theology as well as in the mind of every Christian. The preacher used his text as a motto, and arranged it under much vigorous thought, which could, of course, be classified under similar texts. The sermon had been more attractive had there been less matter and more illustration. In commencing his two chief divisions, he had two very effective analogies—the builder and his foundation, and the emigrant and his vessel. These he used effectively, and led to the expectation that as he proceeded analogies and figures would illuminate his progress. But there was no other figure employed. Plain statement followed, vigorously expressed and logically arranged. Though the discourse was doctrinal, and in most hands would have appeared dry and commonplace, yet it was otherwise in his. He has a good,

commanding appearance, and a very fascinating manner. He employs a very neat and polished style, and speaks with great firmness and energy. So admirable is his manner that even very ordinary matter would tell effectively in his hands. But his matter is only inferior to his manner. He enters deeply into the great mystery of Godliness. He heals not the hurt of the people slightly, but probes the sores of the human soul thoroughly, and applies the remedy very effectively. In the preceding discourse the ability of the Saviour to save to the uttermost was ably and profoundly reasoned. He went in quest of proof to His divine appointment, to his Godhead, to his atonement, and to his exhaustless resources as the Mediator. He entered deeply into the blessings Christ confers, and showed them to be worthy of all the cost and suffering of their preparation. He showed, in a striking point of view, the spirituality and permanence of these blessings, including perfect purity and progressive happiness throughout eternity.

The following may be regarded as the leading features of his mind and manner:—Both his discourses and prayers indicate great clearness of conception. He expresses no half-formed thoughts. Every one has a distinct form and a thorough finish. Along with this lucidity of thought there is marked decision and emphasis in all he says. He appears as one who has thoroughly made up his mind on every topic, and is prepared to declare it let whosoever lists. This places the hearer in a vantage position. He listens to truth which he dares not gainsay. Even in cases where the matter is doubtful a bold asseveration makes many receive it without question; but when truth is firmly delivered it is more likely to be received than when delivered with hesitation and doubt. Though the logical faculty is by no means deficient, the preacher is in some danger of neglecting the *lucidus ordo*, or at least of so stating his outline that the train of thought and argumentation may be lost sight of. Thus in the outline given, the different branches in the argument were somewhat wordily expressed, and were not likely to be fully appreciated by certain classes of hearers. It is of great importance to embody the leading thoughts in brief terse phraseology. This has always been particularly observed by Mr Jay of

Bath, the most successful of English preachers. He takes care to express his outline in a very few words, and then fills up with apt, lucid, and vigorous illustration. Our preacher, in addition to these peculiarities, displays a ripe scholarship. His thoughts, his sentences, his enunciation and style, display an accuracy and finish which can be acquired only at the midnight oil. Though he uses no notes there is not a word mispronounced nor out of place—not a sentence loose or disjointed—not an argument false or irrelevant. The most fastidious can find no fault with his style of manner. This is a great recommendation to his doctrines. The unlettered peasant has preached the gospel in a barn, to his rustic auditory, with great success, but that is no reason why clergymen should not be able to recommend the gospel with all the accomplishments of the scholar and all the graces of the orator. It is to be lamented that comparatively few preachers are ambitious to shine as scholars. The bar and the senate-house abound with thorough scholars, while the pulpit is but too generally occupied with a tame mediocrity. Were all at equal pains as the subject of our sketch, to master both the acquisitive and communicative, the pulpit would soon command more respect. Our preacher is wide awake to the signs of the times. Learning is no longer limited to the few—the children know more than their grandfathers—artizans know more of philosophy and of science than did many professional men of former days; and if the pulpit stand still when all around is progress its mission fails, and the priesthood comes into contempt. We doubt whether the term of study now should be the same as it was a century ago. Even increased facilities of study do not make up the difference between what was necessary to be known then, and what is now. He who is apt to teach in these days must be well versed in ancient and modern literature—in a thorough knowledge of men and things. In these respects Mr T. is fully qualified for his work.

Mr Thomson was born in Paisley, where he acquired the elements of education. He studied at Glasgow University from the session of 1823-4 to 1829. He studied theology under Drs Dick and Mitchell, from 1827 to 1831. He was licensed in 1832, and ordained at Slateford, a village two miles out of Edinburgh, in October, 1833.

Slateford was the scene of the ministerial labours of the late Dr Dick (one of the most gifted and eminent men that the Secession Church has produced—Dr Belfrage was Mr Thomson's immediate successor,) during a period of 15 years, prior to his translation to Glasgow, where he rose to merited eminence and celebrity as an accomplished scholar and profound theologian.

Mr Thomson has laboured in his present charge for a period of 17 years with much acceptance over a flourishing country congregation. His name is honourably associated with the plans of theological education pursued in the United Presbyterian Church. Occupying a rural retreat sufficiently near one of the great centres of influence in the body to render his services available in connection with the public business of the Church, he has for several years held the convenership of the Synodical Committee on Theological Education, and has taken a leading part in advancing the various measures with which it is charged. He is known to have applied his energies, with great perseverance and success, to the introduction of the very efficient plans now in operation throughout the Church for superintending the studies of divinity students during the intervals of the session of the hall, and to the extension and improved management of the valuable library belonging to the body; and he is one of a band of zealous and working men who have greatly interested themselves in the establishment of a scheme for forming ministers' libraries in connection with the congregations of the Church—a plan which is sure, when set on foot, as it is likely soon to be, to operate most beneficially for the interests of the body, and which might most advantageously be introduced into other religious denominations. He is also known to have acted for some years as secretary to an association of Christians of various denominations in Edinburgh, whose object was to promote the publication and circulation of works against Popery, Puseyism, and Infidelity, and under whose auspices an interesting and valuable course of lectures was delivered, some time ago, here and elsewhere, on the tenets of Romanism.

REV. JOHN BRYCE,

SALTCOATS.

It is alleged that there are old men in London who never saw the country. All the surface of the earth with which they are familiar is Macadamised and paved. The forest and the field are to them matters of report. The green sward—the lofty pines—the towering mountain—the fertile vale, are to them matters of history and tradition. Though such men are said to exist, report saith nothing of their character—intellectual, moral, or religious; but as man is evidently affected by circumstances, to a greater or less extent, there can be little difficulty in forming some conjecture regarding them. One thing is pretty certain that none of them are philosophers, naturalists, or poets. There is no more effectual method of robbing man of the divinity within him than to confine him within the limits of the artificial and conventional. Something of the certain sciences such may know; but of everything connected with man's higher nature they must be utterly ignorant. What must be his ideas of the music of the spheres who never heard aught but the ceaseless rattle over the stony street and the monotonous hum of a busy population? What can his ideas be of the beautiful who never saw aught but seemly and unseemly piles of buildings and the murky atmosphere above? What meaning can Arabia's groves and Hermon's dew convey to his mind who knows no perfumes but those from pestilential cesspools, and no dews but those on the walls of crowded buildings? Such a man may have some vestiges of mind in him, but of heart and soul he can have but a very small portion. Though there are but few who have never inhaled

the country breeze, there are many whose escapes from the city are few and far between. The works of man chiefly confine and limit their view, and the works of God, as they come from his hand, are seldom witnessed. How mighty, how magical, the effect produced on the mind of the citizen, not wholly dead to beauty and joy, is an excursion into the country, after a long city residence! His better feelings and affections feel that they have escaped as a bird from the fowler. He breathes as a free man ought to breathe. Every sense is regaled—the eye is charmed, the ear soothed. The man approaches nearer to the centre of happiness. He holds converse with God through his works—works which to him bear the fresh and free impress of the Creator's hand. He feels himself in a mighty temple, and, if his heart is right, he worships Him who made the sea and the dry land. A church to him, however lone its site—indeed the more lone the better—bears a marked significance. He proceeds to worship God “yonder,” with feelings devout and intense. Around the edifice where he was wont to worship there were only the memorials of man's wisdom and man's folly—all around, in the calm outspread, the finger of God is seen. The voice of God is still heard among the trees of the garden, and it is the voice of love and mercy. Or if the worshipper is near the ocean—the mirror where Omnipotence images himself, the effect is holier and more reverential still. Its constant waves and tides urge home on the mind the restlessness of time—its permanence, its majesty, urges home the settledness, the vastness of eternity. What must his feelings be who goes to worship in the place, standing on the margin of the ocean, where the subject of our sketch stately ministers! What a significance is found in the words—

“Let heavens be glad before the Lord, and let the earth rejoice,
Let seas, and all that is therein, cry out and make a noise,
Before the Lord.”

Last Sabbath it was the privilege of the writer of these remarks to worship in these circumstances, in Saltcoats Established Church. At 11 o'clock the subject of our sketch gave out Matthew xxvi. 41, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;” and, without any prefatory remarks, pro-

ceeded with his exposition. I. Temptation means, in general, any kind of trial—it may be evil, or it may be good. Thus God is said to have tempted Abraham, by putting him on a very hard duty to discover his grace of faith, his love and obedience, in the sacrifice of Isaac. In like manner God's miracles of mercy and judgment, whereby he tried the obedience of the Hebrews and Egyptians, are called temptations. What thing soever tends to discover what is in the heart and will of man may be called a temptation. In this sense afflictions, outward crosses, and bereavements, sent by God, are temptations. These are sent for good and wise purposes, and ought to be received and improved as such by all. Sometimes they are sent as chastisements for past sins—the Israelites delivered into the hands of their enemies, when they had forsaken the worship of the true God. Sometimes to prevent sins to come—Paul had a thorn in the flesh to buffet him for his humiliation. In the former case they may be called restoratives to awaken men to repentance; in the latter, preservatives to keep men from falling into those sins to which they were particularly exposed. Affliction, again, we are taught in the ninth of John, is sent, not for sin, but to manifest the works of God. But, for whatever end they are sent, they are all intended as trials of his people's love and obedience, and are proofs of their heavenly Father's love. But by temptation is more frequently meant in Scripture such a trial as is intended to ruin a man in his spiritual concerns by inducing him to sin. Thus was Joseph sorely tried by the power and favour in his lord's family if he complied with the temptation, and threatened with the shame and infamy of the very villainy he was tempted with in case he refused. Moses, too, by the allurements of an Egyptian court, where little was to be seen or heard but the pleasures of sin. But the chief seducers of men that draw them into the crooked and oblique ways of sin are, 1, The great adversary of souls and men who have enlisted in his service. Ye know the wiles of the devil, and however much his agency may be ridiculed by the men of the world,—however much they may puzzle the humble scholar of the Bible to explain the nature and manner of his operations, we trust their ridicule will not cause you forego your belief in it,

nor the difficulty of explaining it be an objection against its truth. It is the doctrine of the Bible, and as such demands your unqualified assent. How often has he, fatally, alas, to many, proved his ability to tempt and to overcome ! And he is still represented as “ a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour.” His emissaries are in every place—his work is never at a stand. By the pernicious principles and vicious habits of such as like Ahab sell themselves to work all manner of iniquity, are the bounds of his kingdom enlarged, and the people of God tempted to forego their integrity. Wit, ridicule, and infectious example, found everywhere among the vain disputers of the world, are strong temptations. How many have been brought to deny their faith when the shafts of ridicule were directed against them, who had withstood all the attacks of serious argument. Again, What temptations have we among the sons of ignorance and sensuality, who debase the moral feelings, blunt the sensibility of conscience, and inflame the passions; and, above all, the influence of companionship which insensibly steals over the mind, producing conformity of character in ungodliness and sin. “ Evil communications corrupt good manners” is a truth too frequently verified in the sad experience of many who set out in life with principles pure and correct and having the fear of God before their eyes. How careful ought we to be in the choice of those we make our companions ! It is not the openly profane and abandoned we require most to shun—these will be more ready to shock than allure the young and tender mind ; but it is those who under the specious mask of a fair character conceal the insidious poison of unprincipled hypocritical morality. 2, There are also what may be called the seductions of life, which tend to draw men from God. The things of the world, whether good or bad, are destructive lures and great temptations. Prosperity and adversity have their peculiar snares and trials. An abundance of good things makes men liable to the swellings of pride, to forgetfulness of God, of their duty, and of eternity. While, on the other hand, poverty and adversity expose to murmurings and discontent, to fraud and injustice, to theft and rapine ; hence the propriety of the prayer of Agur, “ Give me neither poverty nor riches,” &c.

Perhaps of the two, prosperity is the more dangerous. It was by promises of worldly glory and greatness that the tempter made the third and grand attack on our Saviour, when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and said, "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Hence the necessity of the caution Moses gives the Israelites when they should possess the riches of Canaan, " Beware thou forget not the Lord thy God"—and the result was such as he feared, for we read "they waxed fat and kicked." II. Consider the means appointed for resisting and overcoming temptation —watching and prayer. The conjoining of these two duties reminds us of the necessity of supernatural aid along with our own exertions. We are not only to watch, but to pray also. We cannot receive grace to help without prayer, nor be able to overcome without vigilance. The duty of prayer is as necessary as if God were to do all for us, and the duty of watchfulness as binding upon us as if we were to do all ourselves. Watchfulness implies an apprehension and a foresight of danger, and an endeavour to prevent or ward it off. The first of these is opposed to carnal security, and the second to a thoughtless indifference. The carnally secure entertains no apprehension of danger either remote or immediate; he enjoys a rest, but it is polluted, and will eventually destroy him with a great destruction. He is like one who has unconsciously made his bed in the lion's den. Of the two states to which we have said watchfulness is opposed, we know not which is the better; and yet surely it is better to be altogether blind to our fate than with our eyes open to remain careless of the ruin that impends. With a knowledge of the threatened danger, to remain unmoved bespeaks such insensibility, such daring hardihood, and such recklessness of weal as is beyond the power of man to describe or the heart to conceive. A sense of danger is the first step to safety. "Had the goodman of the house known at what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." Hence the rightly-exercised Christian is like a skilful general who not only views danger at a distance but takes every precaution to encounter it successfully. The enemy may be foiled in many an assault, but the vigilance of

his opponent is no less on the alert, for he knows he may return and carry by surprise what he failed to effect by force. The security of a warrior is to be always ready. Watchfulness is an ever-active duty, opposed to sloth, idleness, and remissness ; it considers diligently and surveys minutely its own strength and weakness compared with those of the enemy, and takes its measures accordingly. Vigilance, too, keeps at a distance from those occasions that lead to sin. It is not only active when brought within the sphere of danger, within the range of the pestilential vapour of temptation, but it descries at a distance the occasions which lead to sin, and keeps aloof. It may be often difficult to see where duty ends and sin begins; but if one ventures as near to sin as he may, he is in danger of going farther—perhaps it is better to keep one step within the line of duty than, by approaching its very verge, to run the risk of stumbling into the territory of sin. It is worth remembering “that fear is a Christian’s garrison”—the way to be secure is always to fear—it causeth circumspection. Fear is that flaming sword which turns every way to keep out sin, it quickens to duty, is a remedy against presumption, and an antidote against sloth. But to watch successfully we must resist temptation on its first assault—there must be no parleying. It was by listening to temptation that sin was first introduced. We must flee from the very appearance of evil. But the vigilant Christian must not only watch against assaults and surprises from without, he must search his own heart and know the plagues that are there, and learn that he carries about with him continually that which is likely to do him more mischief than any thing that may annoy him from without. There is a sin in every man’s bosom which he careth not to have reprobated. Besetting sins are as varied as are conditions in life. All have their darling sin, and by this one inlet does the enemy enter and carry the citadel of the heart. Temptations, strong and powerful, may be presented in vain, till the besetting sin is brought, and before it has yet approached the walls there is a moving perceived in the host within, but it is not the bustle of arming for the battle, but the preparation of a friendly and welcome reception. The strength of temptation from without will always be propor-

tioned to the power of inward corruption. One cherished sin will assuredly make room for more, debar all communion with the Father of spirits, keep Christ from entering that heart, and as certainly lead to destruction as if there were a thousand. Grace and sin may and do exist together, but grace and the love of sin never can—this argues the unsoundness of a heart not right with God. The watchful Christian will always be guarded against this sin, and make it his first care. Lastly, To watch successfully, temperance and sobriety are essentially requisite. See the sad case of Benhadad and Belshazzar, and hear the warning of our Saviour, “Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, so that that day come upon you unawares.” Prayer is the other means specified for guarding against temptation, and it is the more important of the two. We war not with flesh and blood alone; and can the feeble arm of man resist the numerous attacks of principalities and powers? We must call in to our aid foreign assistance; and the Rock of ages is the Christian’s strength, to whom he must have recourse by frequent fervent prayer. “Watchfulness,” observes one, “without prayer is presumption, and prayer without watchfulness is a mocking of God.” God generally gives spiritual blessings and deliverances as he does temporal, by the mediation of vigorous industry. Prayer is the highest privilege and greatest happiness of the Christian upon earth—It is when engaging in this holy duty—when the affections, warmed as with seraphic fire, glow with holy ardour to the Father of spirits—when faith beholds her Saviour standing at the right hand of glory—when the soul has winged her flight to the secret place of the Most High, and feels enjoyment allied to the spirits around the throne—it is from this height that the Christian, looking back on the world and all its temptations, can take up the challenge and say, If God be for me, who can be against me? But as prayer is here joined with vigilance, which is a personal duty, we may understand the command to pray specially to refer to secret prayer. It is in secret prayer that the soul delights to hold communion with the Father who seeth in secret—and by this exercise is it prepared to engage

right in the duty of public worship. It is by this that the Powers on high are brought down to the aid of man, and the man raised to a foretaste of the joys and a participation in the triumphs of the redeemed above. Let us consider, III., the necessity of using these means if we would succeed in resisting temptation. There may be some among you who may altogether neglect the duty of secret prayer, and some may forget that the duty of watchfulness is as binding as prayer. Both must be done—but watchfulness is the more likely to be left undone. Prayer is an act that may be considered as done at once, but watchfulness is not an act so much as a habit. Nor is prayer a solitary act, which may acceptably be performed at any given time—there is a state of mind and feeling peculiar to this exercise, and indispensable to the right performance of it. There must be a love for it in the heart, or else there can be no favourable ear lent to the requests of the lips—and where this love for communion with God exists in the heart, there is a corresponding fear produced by it lest anything should enter that might interpose between God and the soul, to mar its joys and disturb its peace. Now this fear is active at all times, however remote from the season of prayer; for the man knows well (we speak of him who wishes to meet with his God in prayer) that every sinful thought which he has entertained during the day, acts as a cold and dead weight on the liveliness and spirituality of his devotions, and is a serious drawback on his communion with God. Fear is just another name for watchfulness. They are not distinct duties, but one and the same—distinct thus far, however, that the engaging in the one is not the performance of the other. Some excuse themselves by saying that they watch in temptation, that they may not be overcome; but the command is “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.” The preacher then briefly noticed various kinds of temptations, and concluded with an appeal to the congregation to watch, and be earnest, else all would be lost.

After prayer and praise had been again engaged in the congregation was dismissed at a few minutes before one o'clock. The strength of the discourse lay in the latter division—the difference between watchfulness and prayer and the necessity

for both of them. The first division was an elucidation of the nature of temptation, and the most prevalent means by which men are seduced from the faith. The whole gave evidence of acute reasoning powers, never diverging into the ideal and speculative, but keeping close by the Scriptures, and proving the doctrines he teaches by copious references to both Old and New Testaments. Of the nature of prayer itself he said little, assuming no doubt that his hearers were already conversant with it, but confined himself more particularly to its distinctive features, and yet necessitating watchfulness. This part of the subject was treated with much discrimination and ingenuity. He showed that prayer was not simply the uttering of devotional words at stated periods, but the outpourings of a mind at all times pervaded with feelings of reverence and love to God; and, to be successful, must be accompanied with a constant watchfulness against evil. Christains he compared to soldiers, who are always exposed to an enemy, ever vigilant—watching an opportunity to attack or mislead them. God gives spiritual mercies only to the watchful and industrious. Many other terse and vigorous thoughts were interspersed throughout. While his motto seems to be, "Prove all things," he does not so by a cold geometric train of reasoning, but frequently breaks into vivid gleams of eloquent sentiment, which give a charm and fascination to his discourses. A flowery preacher he is not—nor does he say odd or startling things, but he explains, illustrates, cautious, and encourages, in a style that all can understand, and the most cultivated appreciate. His sermons indicate more of the in-door than the out-door student—of the library more than of external creation. The sacred page is evidently the mine which he most frequently explores, and from which he extracts his richest treasures. That faculty which ransacks the sky, earth, and ocean, and lays up treasures for the mind's future wants, that receives inspiration from the sun and moon, and bursts into song at the sight of the fair, and lovely, and beautiful, is his to some extent; but he can delineate, in glowing colours the way of salvation, the hopes and triumphs of the Christian, and can present Calvary and the scenes with which it is associated with impressive and striking effect. The flowers with which he adorns his subject

are those of paradise, for ever fresh and lovely. There is much fervency in his manner, and his voice is full and powerful, but the circumstance of reading his discourse in some measure mars the ease and grace of his movements and gestures. When engaged in prayer he stands almost immovable, with one hand raised from the desk, and gives utterance to a continuous train of devotional sentiment, at once appropriate, unctious and fervid. In the delivery of his discourses, however, there is some degree of monotony in his enunciation, which allows many brilliant passages to escape the notice of all but the most attentive. In a word, he possesses much mental shrewdness, a warm temperament, correct and dignified diction, and preaches what is considered the orthodox doctrines of the Bible without affectation or ostentatious display. In person he is rather under the common stature, of full habit, with a countenance that bespeaks robust health and country air. His brow is round and full, and is adorned by hair flaked with grey, so trimmed as to rebel against its natural position. He is much respected in the neighbourhood ; and parties of all denominations agree in pronouncing him a preacher of superior abilities.

In similar towns it is not uncommon to find clergymen somewhat rude in speech and manners ; but in this case the preacher has not allowed society to rob him of the refinement and elegance which ought ever to characterise the gentleman and scholar. It is a grievous loss to both preacher and people when the former lets himself down to all the provincialities and peculiarities of the scene of his labours. The preacher's aim should be to bring his people up to his standard when they happen to be inferior in education and accomplishments. The subject of our sketch, though removed to a considerable distance from his *alma mater*, has evidently not ceased to be a student, and hence his discourses have a finish and polish which only a ripe scholarship can confer.

The subject of our sketch was born about the commencement of this century, in the parish of Muthil, Perthshire, of parents humble but respectable. His father was a farmer in the barony of Innerpaffaray, under Earl Kinnoul. Mr Bryce was educated at the parish schools of Madderty and Muthil, and afterwards took the full course at Glasgow University.

He resided for four years, during the summer months, in a Glasgow family at Largs, and was afterwards proposed to the Presbytery of Irvine for license. Having undergone the usual trials, he was licensed by them in November, 1826. In the spring of 1828, the Rev. Mr Hendry, minister of Ardrossan, requiring an assistant, the late Professor M'Gill was requested to select a few young preachers as candidates; when, out of six or seven heard by the people, Mr B. was chosen, and entered on his duties in June, 1828. After two years probation, a petition from the parish was presented to the Earl of Eglinton, requesting Mr Bryce to become assistant and successor, when he was accordingly ordained by the Presbytery of Irvine, in July, 1830, and has laboured with success, in the midst of an attached flock, ever since.

The church was lately reseated, and fitted up with gas, containing accommodation for, we believe, from 800 to 900 sitters. Notwithstanding a Highland congregation formed out of it in 1836, the Free Church in 1843, and a new church at Ardrossan in 1844, it still continues almost crowded, with an attentive and intelligent congregation.

The Sabbath-school is superintended by Mr B., with a staff of above thirty teachers; and he lives on the best understanding with the other ministers in the place, while they mutually assist each other at a prayer meeting held weekly, alternately in the Parish Church and the United Presbyterian.

The parish school of Ardrossan is situated in the town of Saltcoats, and is well known and largely attended. It is at present taught by Charles Marshall, LL.D., under whose able management it is still increasing in popularity and public favour.

SEPTEMBER 14, 1860.

REV. ROBERT ELDER, M.A.,

ROTHESAY.

We hear and read much in these times of the doctrine of equality, the exact meaning of which is not easily understood. When we look around us for the materials or facts on which such a doctrine is founded, we find them few and far between. On the contrary, evidence of the very opposite presents itself on every hand. Above us, the worlds that wheel in the depth of space, so far as science can determine, are of unequal magnitude, and their circles of revolution, which have been traced out for them by the finger of God, are equally varied. The axiom, that variety is the order of nature, is demonstrated to the most casual observer by every hill and valley, lake and river, tree and leaf, by every sunrise and sunset, and day and season. And no less so is the fact apparent in man, physically or mentally. Nor are men equally deserving. There are the indolent and the active, the virtuous and the vicious, the honourable and dishonourable, in endless degree. So long as there is such inequality of merit, equality of reward would be most palpable injustice. It is natural law that, even in this life, man should so far receive according to his deserts—that industry shall have its rewards, slothfulness its punishments, and honour its respect. This great principle may be regarded as the cement of society ; yet society does not always discriminate the just amount of reward or punishment due to those who are its benefactors or its bane. For lip service honours are occasionally lavished with the utmost prodigality, while more sterling services are sometimes regarded with indifference. Was gratitude to benefactors always awake, no one could visit

the scene of the labours of the subject of our present notice without feeling indebted to the man who provided the means of propelling vessels against wind and tide, and thus rendering the lovely residences on the coast, as it were, the suburbs of Glasgow. But man is not true to his convictions as regards his fellows or his Maker. The Author of every perfect gift is forgotten, and the wonder is not great that the discoverers of the laws which guide the material world should also be overlooked. The man who was the means of bringing about the greatest changes in our navigation received few honours while he lived, and little respect has been shown to his memory. Among the many places which stud the banks of the Clyde, and which have become of importance through the agency of steam navigation, Rothesay stands pre-eminent. Once only the stronghold of a haughty chief, and the theatre of incessant feuds, it is now the seat of civilised men—of industry and peace. Few localities present scenes so inviting and sublime, so beneficial for the infirm, or affording such agreeable recreation for the healthy. Nor are the duties of religion neglected or despised by the mass of the inhabitants. Few places have comparatively so much church accommodation, and few places have churches so well filled, or ministers so much beloved. Among the most respected of its ministers is the subject of our present sketch. On a late occasion we had an opportunity of hearing him in Argyle Church of this city. His text was—John vi. 45, “It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” He commenced by saying that

It is written by the inspired apostle, that, “by grace are ye saved,” and every one who professes the principles of the gospel will acknowledge the fact. There is a secret feeling that clings to men, that there must be, in point of merit, a difference between them and others, if they be saved through faith;—but, to exclude all boasting, it is added, “and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” My friends, this is a solemn and humbling doctrine; but the Lord Jesus teaches it clearly in this chapter. He says, verse 35, “I am the bread of life,” &c. This is precious doctrine. But to bring down

the pride of man, and to make the truth plain, He goes on to say, verse 44, "No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him."—And farther, verse 45, "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God," &c. This is God's way of bringing a sinner to salvation through Christ; and, 1st, I shall briefly point out who those are of whom the text speaks; 2d, Try to make you understand their distinguishing privilege, as here set forth—they are taught of God; and, 3d, The fruit of his teaching. 1, To put this distinctly before you as to who the persons are, spoken of in the text, observe that the context opens up the sovereignty, freeness, and abundance of grace. The Jews murmured at him because of these views. The Lord Jesus, to explain, stated the important fact that the doctrine was not new, but set forth in the Old Testament. "It is written in the prophets," &c. The preacher then counselled his hearers to read the 54th chapter of Isaiah, as it referred to Zion and the gathering in of the Gentiles. Christ says, Here is the doctrine of the Bible, "all shall be taught of God." Isaiah says, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." By the expression "all" the Lord means all the children of Zion whom God will acknowledge in that day when he shall make up his jewels. 2, Their distinguishing privilege—they are taught of God. Observe the design of God from eternity with reference to the children of Zion. It is to bring them out of a state of sin and misery, and save them with an everlasting salvation. The Lord finds this people dark and dead to divine things, as are others. They do not know the danger of sin. Even though sitting under the gospel they have no feeling of the need of Christ—therefore Christ and his salvation are trampled under foot. Their hearts are hardened—the darkness within them has blinded their minds. This is a dark picture of the state of God's chosen, but all are by nature the children of wrath. O what a barrier in the way of salvation! Hence the glorious privilege spoken of in the text—"all shall be taught of God." The Lord takes this barrier out of the way. There are two things to be considered here—1st, The Teacher. The Teacher is God—"they shall be all taught of God." Look at the form of expression. It is not merely that God will

take providential dealings with them—there is a Power sent down from above to change the darkness into light. It is said to be the Father—every one that hath learned of the Father. This Divine teaching is generally ascribed to the Holy Ghost—"When the Spirit of truth is come he will guide to all truth." He teaches the conscience, and the understanding, and the heart. But the Father speaketh by the Spirit, representing Godhead—Jehovah—in the economy of grace. Christ would have his people trace up to its fountain of sovereign and divine grace this divine teaching. That we may get a view of this, he declares it is the Father himself that communicates light to the soul, &c. 2d. The teaching. There are two expressions employed to explain this. Every man that hath *heard* the Father, and hath *learned* of the Father. This idea was illustrated at some length. 3d. Let us consider the fruit of this privilege, "Every man, therefore, that hath heard, &c., cometh unto me." I observe, 1st, that God designed to save a people. But this only in one way, by Christ Jesus; that is his plan, and not otherwise will he save any. But by reason of the darkness of their minds Christ says "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." The Lord removes this darkness from his people, and then "Every man that hath learned of the Father cometh unto me." "Cometh" expresses willingness and action. It is by God's grace and power that a penitent sinner comes to Christ, &c. &c. 2d. "Every man that hath heard, &c., cometh unto me;" that is, when there is real teaching from God, it brings a man *daily* to Christ for new supplies of grace. He is made to feel a continual sense of sinfulness, weakness, and nothingness, so that he is often ready to despair. But this teaching of the Holy Ghost always brings him back to Christ. O poor soul, it says, the fulness of Christ is inexhaustible—the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. This is the fruit of the teaching of God, "Return to thy rest, O my soul." Paul says, "I live by faith." It keeps a man hanging on the hand of Christ, and waiting on, that he may destroy all sin in him, &c. 3d. This divine teaching will also bring him to glory. "The path of the just is like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"—till they arrive in glory. "I will

raise him up," says Christ, verse 44, "at the last day." In conclusion, 1st, I charge you to try your light by the test here given. You have the word of God's gospel preached. It is not the province of the minister to bring a railing accusation against any one; but, in the name of the Lord, has it brought you to an entire surrender of yourselves to Christ? has it brought you daily and habitually to hang on the hand of Christ for everything? If your light has not wrought this it is not God's light—it is the light of hell. 2d, No means, no privilege, will ever save your soul without divine teaching. Unless God rend the heavens and come down to be your Teacher you cannot be saved, for nothing else will bring you to Christ. I take my stand on this text, and contend against all in the world who think otherwise. 3d, Are there some here who are truly sensible of their sin, and who are seeking above all things to be found in Christ? After enlarging on this point, he concluded with a warning to those who had no anxiety to learn of God, showing that they are strangers to Christ.

The discourse, which was extended to great length, was somewhat peculiar in its character. There was a process of reasoning and of practical enforcement carried on at once, as well as a style of expression considerably different from the common, which may be characterised by the word *terse*. It will be observed, by the above outline, that the preacher's views are rigidly Calvinistic. He anatomised the work of regeneration with great minuteness, and described the effects produced at various stages on the mind and bearing of the individual. He gave also the symptomatic phenomena of the state of the heart with the precision of a physician describing the functions of the body. Many of his expressions are comprehensive, and suggest much more than is expressed. Secular knowledge he introduces but sparingly, while the words of holy writ are copiously employed. The great peculiarity of his discourses is their fervour. They pulsate, as it were, with pious earnestness, which frequently bursts out in exclamations of wonder at the mercy and goodness of God, or of pity for the blindness, or folly, or ingratitude of mankind. The preacher's manner is in keeping with his matter. He speaks distinctly,

the voice rising and falling in accordance with the state of feeling of the speaker. His hands grasp the Bible or the desk, and his eyes move and flash as if he were under the influence of strong nervous excitement. Yet there is nothing extravagant or fantastic in his matter or manner. There is fire, yet not the crackling blaze of consuming thorns, but the steady flame of an altar fire—not a polemical conflagration, but the beacon light that warns men of danger, and saves from destruction. There are preachers that acquit themselves as if they aimed only at a momentary effect—that appear to be satisfied if they proclaim the truth, but the aim of this preacher seems to be permanent effect. He gives not his hearers sweet things to please the palate, but he gives what he considers worth taking home with them, and if they choose not to do this, he cares not what their momentary sensations may be. It is but seldom one is to be met with so thoroughly earnest in his work. The impression produced by hearing him preach is, that rather than part with a principle, he would part with all earthly things—houses, lands, goods, and friends—that in the days of the covenant he would have been a wanderer on the moors, an inhabitant of the caves and dens of the earth, a marked object of legal persecution. That he has made the Scriptures his favourite study is apparent from the frequency of his allusions to their pages, and from the apposite quotations with which he illustrates his ideas. It is not his principle to evade disputed points of doctrine by passing them by, nor does he go out of his way for the sake of encounter; but when he does meet with opposition he meets it boldly, and in a manner that shows he is neither ignorant of his opponent's tactics nor of the proper use of his own weapons. His mind is naturally argumentative, but it appears to be governed by a sense of the importance of illustrating and explaining what he considers legitimate doctrine, in preference to singling out and refuting false systems. He chooses to set before his hearers the truths of the gospel rather than to explain false views, and then set to work to undo them. Continual wrangling with Socinians, Arminians, Arians, and Unitarianism, is generally a very unprofitable way of spending time, and does more to unsettle the minds of the hearers than to confirm and

establish them in the truth. To what the Scripture states explicitly he gives implicit belief; what it does not unfold clearly he allows to remain within the veil; but the sticklers for logical demonstration on all points take from the brightness of one passage so that they may have clear insight into another, and the consequence is that the whole becomes dim and shadowy, and the way to heaven is left wholly to chance. These votaries of reason are aware of this themselves, and, that there may be no mistake, many of them have totally expunged both Satan and the place of punishment from their creed. This being the case, every one may do what he pleases, as it will come to the same thing at last.

Mr Elder is above the ordinary stature, and of spare habit, with a body which, in appearance, indicates advancing years, and a countenance of youthful smoothness and bloom. His features are regular, and his well-developed brow is ornamented with dark soft brown hair, decently disposed. He is qualified to preach in the Gaelic tongue, and though he is in the habit of doing so one part of the day there is nothing in his English that would indicate his being brought up among the northern mountains. But his warm temperament, and his impassioned earnestness, tell that he belongs to no passive or yielding race. He is much esteemed by all denominations in the town where he at present labours, and has a large congregation attending his ministry.

Mr Elder is a native of Argyleshire, and was brought up in Campbelton. He studied at Glasgow College, under the late excellent Dr M'Gill, and in 1831, when very young, was ordained to the pastoral charge of the parish of Kilbrandon, in the Presbytery of Lewis, where he laboured for above three years and a half. He was then translated to the parish of Killin, Perthshire, in 1834, where he laboured till October, 1838, and was then translated to St Paul's Church, Edinburgh, where he continued to minister till 1847, when he was settled in his present charge. The many duties and anxieties connected with the long controversy, and subsequent Disruption in the Church of Scotland, which fell heavily on the ministers of Edinburgh, helped to undermine his health, and in 1844, he was seized with a severe illness, in consequence

of which he was for many months laid aside from public work of every kind, and, though mercifully restored to a measure of health, he has not yet fully recovered his bodily strength. It was this circumstance, under Providence, which mainly led to his removal from Edinburgh to his present charge, which had become vacant by the death of his highly revered predecessor, the Rev. Peter M'Bryde, the congregation having been led to give him a most harmonious call, and the medical men who knew his case being of opinion that such a change might prove beneficial. His health has improved at Rothesay, though he is still by no means robust. The congregation in Rothesay is large and harmonious, increasing their contributions to religious objects, and encouraging their minister by their regular attendance on the public means of grace

It may be mentioned, that before his settlement in the ministry, he acted for a short time as tutor to the family of Lord John Campbell, afterwards Duke of Argyle, whose son, his former pupil, is the present Duke. The pupil, as a scholar and orator, does great credit to his quondam teacher.

OCTOBER, 26, 1850.

REV. JAMES RUSSELL,

OLD KILPATRICK.

ALL men who are favoured with the common faculty of vision, see in the physical world the same forms, textures, and colours. A mountain, a lake, or a tree depicts its peculiarities with a perfect sameness upon every healthy eye. The phenomena of the thunderstorm present to all the same features, and so does the approach of morn and even ; but while they are thus known and recognised, how very different are they felt ? To one man a mountain is just a height, difficult to climb, but a pleasant place to bask upon when the weather is shining. To another, it is a thing composed of stone, earth, and herbage, in such positions as speak of gradual progression through myriads of ages, or of an earth delivered from the deep centuries on centuries agone, or of violent convulsions that have shaken earth to its foundations, and rocked the solid elements into confusion. To a third it is not only these, but also an emblem of might and majesty, shadowing forth Him who sitteth in the heavens, the Ancient of days, the Unchangeable, the Omnipotent—a ladder on which angels are continually ascending and descending—a pathway to the empyreum. How very different, then, will each of these regard creation ? The first will be apt to judge of it by its capabilities to produce such things as minister to the bodily appetites ; the second will regard it as a great enigma to test his powers of reason ; and the third will feel that it is allied to a world unseen, in which his soul or imagination can live and move, and hold communion with beings more exalted than any on earth. The first of these will naturally seek his pleasure in the circles of

fashion and sociality—the second in the halls of science and in the company of scientific men, and the third holds high converse in silent, yet significant solitude. Keeping these facts in view, we can easily perceive how it is that there are so many conflicting opinions afloat in regard to the nature and government of the human family—the ills under which they labour, and the manner in which they ought to be rectified. One says, Inculcate habits of industry, and business activity, with a few spare hours to be filled up with fetes and popular amusements; another says, Disseminate sound scientific knowledge; and a third says, Stimulate the imagination—let them hear the poets and let them look to the spacious sky, the mighty ocean, and the flowery earth;—while the fact is that, to an unscientific mind, the path of science is a dull and dreary road, and, to the unpoetic mind, poetry is the most uninviting of all studies. Each individual must have his enjoyments in accordance with the bias of his own mind, and to bring these in subordination to the dictates of morality and religion ought to be the greatest aim of the true philanthropist. Religion debars no man from the enjoyments of sociality, nor of scientific study, nor does it debar him from the exercise of fancy in visionary flights beyond the precincts of the visible, or of time itself; but it hallows all these—it makes them subserve the glory of the common Creator, and the welfare of the human soul as destined henceforth to rise to a higher state of being, to approach nearer the centre of intelligence, and to receive keener and holier perceptions from the Father of lights. The clerical profession offers no exception, but, on the contrary, it is in accordance with these principles that we have our practical working clergymen, our stern defenders of the faith, and our contemplative men. Strictly speaking, it may not be pleasing to see a minister of the gospel necessitated to spend his days in making way through filthy lanes, and entering the abodes of wretchedness and crime, even though his mission be to proclaim the gospel, though we may admire the man who can make the consciousness of duty overcome his repugnance to such scenes; but it is indeed pleasing to think of a pastor living in some rural spot, who loves the solitude for the sake of contemplation and study—who pursues the path of intelli-

gence, and expands and enlightens his own soul, and then, in his public duties, finds that his people can duly appreciate the result of his labours. Such were the train of our thoughts while we approached the plain but decent United Presbyterian Church and manse of Old Kilpatrick, on the afternoon of Sabbath week. About half-past one o'clock the pastor, whose name is given above, entered the pulpit. After the usual devotional exercises were engaged in, he gave out, as text, 1st John iv., v. 19th, "We love Him, because he first loved us." He commenced by saying—As faith may be considered the foundation of the Christian graces and virtues, so love may be considered as the living soul and substance of them. And while faith, on the one hand, is assigned a high pre-eminence in the Scriptures, so love is assigned a similar pre-eminence on the other. We are told that love is the fulfilling of the law—that on these two commandments, that enjoin love to God and man, hang all the law and the prophets, and that the absence of love may be considered as the absence of Christianity. We find, too, that when the Apostle compares the three graces, faith, hope, and charity, and insinuates that they are all of importance, he, at the same time, informs us that charity—or love—is still paramount. This love is valuable on various accounts. It is valuable for its own sake. That affection that rests supremely on the great God—which appreciates his greatness and venerates himself—trusts in him—rests on Jesus as a centre, and that breathes kindness towards the whole family of man, may indeed be entitled the essence of virtue. This is to resemble the great fountain of being—to have Him for an habitation, and to be pervaded by his presence. But it is valuable for the sake of its effects. Philosophy has established the fact that the conduct of man more immediately depends upon the control of the active powers—upon the desires, affections, and other similar faculties of the soul. It has equally established the fact that it is according to the bias these powers have received that they will regulate the actions of man. If they are not pervaded with vicious and malevolent influences, then the movements of the heart, and consequently the actions, will be vicious and malevolent. If they are pervaded by virtuous and benevolent influences, then the conduct will

be virtuous and benevolent. Thus it is that, in order to make a good man, it is not enough to prescribe for him good laws—it is not enough that we give him powerful motives addressed to his self-interest; but we must endeavour to give his mind a favourable bias—in other words, to implant in him the love of good. And this is just what is done by Christianity. It gives being to strong pervading affections, and by this instrumentality it provides for a life of holiness and love. If a man loves God he will honour him; if he loves Christ he will obey him; if he loves his brethren he will do them good; if he loves what is excellent he will perform it. The manner in which this love is implanted in the mind is equally consistent with all right reason. The love that exists in the heart of a good man originated in Him who is the fountain of love. That this essence of human excellence should descend from Him who is the source of all excellence is only a natural conclusion. We receive our faculties from God; and shall we be utterly independent of God for that love which is the very core of our spiritual existence? The preacher then adverted to the priority of the love of God, and proceeded to consider the nature and properties of love to God in the hearts of believers. 1st, The love of God is not now natural to man, but exists in a regenerated heart. At first it was man's duty and privilege to love God, and it was natural for him to do so. Love to God exists in the angels as a bright ornament of their unfallen nature. They have such a sympathy with the excellency of God, that they cannot fail to love, and to be excited with spontaneous emotions of delight in him. But it is otherwise with fallen man. In his unconverted state his mind is enmity to God, and till man be regenerated by divine grace, he never loves God. He may have something that resembles this love—he may conjure up a deity of his own, and love this product of his own imagination—but the God of heaven in his true character he does not, he cannot love. When God regenerates the soul he opens the eye of the mind to perceive its danger and degradation. The man perceives that he is responsible to the judgment—that he is unprepared to meet it, and begins to flee from the wrath to come; and when he has embraced the Saviour, then his views and affections are greatly

changed from what they were—he breathes a new atmosphere, and another sun enlightens him. Having been humbled in himself, and wishing salvation, and feeling the salvation of Christ so fitted to him, he acquiesces in the scheme—and when he feels an acquiescence, he feels a reconciliation with its Author. He views him then as a God of justice and holiness, but especially as a God of love. Love then springs up as the result of regeneration. 2d, That this love involves from the first a due appreciation of the character of God, as well as gratitude to Him for the mission of his Son. Reconciliation is just the commencement of the love of God in the soul. The man sees God as he is, and not through the distorted medium of his own prejudices and corruptions—not through the glimmerings of the works of nature, but through the sunshine of revelation—not by the mere descriptions of the Bible, but in the living example of our Lord Jesus Christ—and when he contemplates God as exhibited in the whole scheme, as well as in the cross of Christ, he finds attributes harmonised which appeared discordant before; and beauty appearing where, to the impenitent, there appears little else than severity and repulsion. He is awed by the Divine Majesty; subdued in spirit by his justice and power; humbled, yet attracted, by his holiness; softened in spirit by his kindness, and overpowered by his love. But it also includes gratitude to him on account of the mission of his Son. The sinner who has fled to Christ for refuge, begins to feel his obligations to God for such a Saviour—a Saviour so dignified, yet humbled so low. And here it may be proper to notice a doctrine sometimes stated in connection with this subject. It has been said that since the law of God consists of gratitude to Him, it of necessity follows that faith must partake of the nature of assurance; for how can a man be grateful for a salvation he knows not whether he has an interest in? We reply, first, That love to God does not consist only in gratitude. It is of great importance to keep in view that it involves, as a most important element, that favourable impression respecting the character of God generally which a believing view of the work of salvation makes on his heart. He is reconciled to God; and though he may have fears that God is not reconciled to him, yet this will not de-

stroy his estimate of a character which he now perceives to be venerable and lovely. Besides, while he has fears he has also hopes; and, however strong his impressions of present acceptance, he is labouring to attain assurance. Therefore, this want of assurance cannot destroy the love of God in the soul. It may check the overflowings of some of its more tender emotions, but cannot destroy its existence. Nay, it sometimes gives peculiar sensibility to this love—for does it not sometimes happen that the pensive Christian mourner feels his own demerits the more deeply the more highly he values the pure and immaculate character of God? Secondly, The want of assurance cannot prevent the exercise of gratitude. It is true the unassured cannot thank God for an assurance which he has not; but he can thank him for whatever hope he possesses. And he can be grateful to God for the atoning sacrifice, for a free gospel, for the overtures of salvation, for whatever mercy he has received. He can thank God for his unspeakable gift, though he cannot thank him that he is assured of the heavenly inheritance. Thirdly, That this love to God is cherished by the contemplation of the love of Christ. The love of God and the love of Christ are inseparably associated; and we cannot properly understand the one without the apprehension of both. In the first instance, meditation on Christ's love will increase our love to him. It is apparently under this impression that the apostle Paul unites very closely establishment in love with the apprehension of the love of Jesus—"That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints," &c. There is here a magnificent view given of the love of Christ, and it is the apostle's prayer that the Ephesians may be able to grasp it. It is the love of God in Christ first cherished, then unfolded, then apprehended, by the believing mind, and then reciprocated—and it appears that the believing mind has a wide field to traverse in investigating this love. It cannot fail to reach in height the heavens where it first began, and it must reach in depth that hell from which it delivers perishing sinners. It must reach through time and space wherever there has been or ever will be a redeemed sinner. If you look to the heavens above, if you consider the depths of the earth—or rather the depths of ether

beneath it—if you look to the east and the west, and the whole sweep of the horizon, you will have a faint image of the love of Christ. Thus the imagination may aid the intellect and the heart in grasping the riches of all heavenly affections. Thus the love of Christ will be cherished, and this will increase love to God the Father. These two departments of Christian love are so intimately connected that we may compare them to a reservoir divided into two compartments, and united by a single inlet, so that you cannot raise the surface of the one without also elevating the surface of the other. Fourthly, This love to God must be supreme. Under this head the preacher described the nature of love in various relationships ; but the love spoken of must surpass the love of creatures as far as the light of the sun surpasses the reflected light from a few mirrors. Fifthly, The love of God must be practical—or, in other words, lead to obedience. This obedience was not simply the exercise of honesty in business or the observance of a few rules of morality. The Christian is impartial in his respect for the divine injunctions, and makes no unseemly selections of a few of them to the exclusion of the rest. He has equal respect to the first or second tables of the law. His love to God and Christ is associated with love to man, doing what he can for the welfare of all. The discourse, which was of great length, was wound up by an appeal to the hearers.

The introduction of the above discourse consisted of a number of general remarks regarding the nature and value of love in its literal acceptation, and also how it is related to Christianity. He then gave an analysis of this love to God as it develops itself in the hearts of believers. This love is not natural to man in his fallen state—the reverence for a Supreme Being that may be and is felt by unbelieving men in the contemplation of nature is not the love of the true God. Before this love is felt he showed that man must see and feel his own degraded condition, and the danger to which he is justly exposed ; and by perceiving Christ as an atoning Saviour he is thus led to feel love to God. He who has this love has also a just estimate of God in all his attributes of justice, holiness, power, and love.

This we regard as fair and natural reasoning, and perfectly orthodox in its conclusions. The doctrine of assurance, on

which there has been so many opinions, as here touched, will not be acquiesced in by all parties; but we must leave disputed points to the controversialists themselves. Regarded as an essay on Christian love, the discourse was comprehensive and decided, showing that the preacher had expended a considerable amount of thought upon the subject previous to bringing it before his audience. It will be observed, even by the outline given above, that there was no flimsy skimming of the surface, but that the whole had been submitted to an elaborate process of reasoning, viewed on all sides, not for the purpose of serving a sectarian end, or to prop up a particular dogma, but to satisfy the dictates of a mind anxious to arrive at truth. Nor was it a merely cold mechanical survey, proceeding onwards through an uninteresting country, and which was submitted to, and valuable only for the sake of its conclusions; but here we had a sweet and lovely spot—there a bright gleam of sunshine—yonder a sparkling stream and wide-spread verdant meadows, and the whole melting away in the cloudless heaven. Not an angry word, not an uncharitable sound, broke the serenity or marred the general harmony of the discussion. The only objectionable feature of the discourse, if we were desirous of being captious, was the complexity of some of the sentences. This arises from the cautiousness of the preacher. To provide against misconception, and to give every point its relative importance and weight, he often introduces qualifying clauses which are apt occasionally to make the hearer lose the leading thought, or point, of the sentence. There is no effort made to say odd or startling things—he relies upon the justness of his remarks and the appropriateness of his similes for his pulpit triumphs. He evidently does nothing for his own sake, that is, to obtrude himself before his subject, or gain for himself a name—all seems done for the sake of the cause for which he labours—for the enlightenment of his hearers and for the glory of religion. While he contends for sound doctrinal views, he insists also on practical evidence of their influence on the heart; and while he regards the Scriptures as affording the best evidences of their own truthfulness, he does not disdain to make excursions into the realms of science and imagination for additional illustrations and similes.

Human knowledge in all its departments is, in his eyes, both desirable and important, and he makes it subserve more than human ends. Of those secondary qualifications, as to manner, voice, and so forth, we must also say a few words. The first thing that strikes the observer is his retiring and somewhat diffident demeanour. He appears before the audience as if there were more from necessity than from choice. He commences in a faint yet distinct tone. His voice is not naturally powerful, though it is clear and firm, and though his utterance is somewhat rapid he pronounces with distinctness. There is little gesture, yet there is considerable energy and spirit, and when in perfect bodily health, which he does not seem to be at present, it is evident that he will display a considerable degree of ardour. One or twice throughout the discourse he hesitated as if memory had proved treacherous, but he soon regained the current of his thoughts, and proceeded with his wonted fluency. According to phrenology, his moral and intellectual faculties predominate considerably. Nor does the conformation indicate those inequalities which are considered to be peculiar to persons famous only for one department of study, and this is borne out by his discourses. They indicate not only the theologian but also the logician, the man of science and the poet. They appear to us to contain a happy combination of philosophy and feeling, unmarred either by rudeness of thought or diction, breathing kindness and benevolence to all, yet proclaiming the gospel in a spirit the very opposite of latitudinarian. Mr Russell is about the ordinary stature, naturally firm set, and of active temperament. He has a full forehead, and surrounded by dark hair which is trimmed somewhat in the military style, and with a view to comfort more than to fashion. His features are not very prominent and are slightly marked with small-pox, and the expression is that of amiability and affection.

While listening to his teachings we cannot but feel that the speaker is naturally gifted with a shrewd, vigorous, and well balanced mind—that he is one who has not thrown off the restraints of the student at the time of receiving license, or who pursues a profession in which his heart is not set; on the contrary, he is one of the few whom nature has destined to be al-

ways a student, anxious to acquire, and anxious to turn his attainments to profitable account.

Mr Russell is a native of Strathaven. He passed through the curriculum of the University of Glasgow with high credit for his scholarship and philosophy. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Relief Presbytery of Glasgow, and ordained assistant and successor to the late Mr Watt, at Old Kilpatrick, in the year 1834. He is a most exemplary pastor in the more private duties of his office, and is much beloved and confided in by his people. Among his brethren in the ministry there are few instances of one so universally loved and respected for the integrity, amiableness, piety, and intellectual excellencies which unitedly endear and adorn his character. With the exception of two or three pamphlets he has published nothing in a separate form, but was a frequent contributor, for about ten years, to the Christian Journal, and furnished papers on Biblical Criticism and Theology, as well as reviews and religious intelligence. When a student we understand he carried off a first prize in the Hebrew class. Though his favourite study is theology, he has also acquired an extensive knowledge of Oriental languages. The church is at present in a flourishing condition, and considerable improvements have recently been made on the property, and effective efforts made to clear off its debts.

AUGUST 24, 1860.

R E V. H E N R Y W I G H T,

EDINBURGH.

THE office of the ministry is generally regarded as one of sacrifice and self-denial, but some who hold it thrive wonderfully notwithstanding. In glancing at the portraits of those great English divines who have left the product of their minds as invaluable heirlooms to Christianity through all after generations, it will be discovered that very few of them can be regarded as poor saints. For the most part, jolly-looking personages they are, and give no indication, by appearance, that they considered self-denial in all things to be a commanded duty. As mind and matter are so intimately connected we might suppose that they aimed at strengthening the former by increasing the latter, and consequently divided the day between the dining-room and the study. The bodily appearance of northern shepherds does not indicate such rich pastures. They have never equalled those of England in profusion of ideas, or in the graces and fluency of diction; but whether this can be accounted for on dietetic principles we do not intend to offer an opinion. In comparing sect with sect in this country, we find that Mother Kirk has always reared the most sonsie family, and to discover how far they surpass their Non-conforming brethren in a mental point of view might be worth the attention of philosophers. In this statistical age an interesting table might be got on this subject, which could be of as much practical use as, at least, one half of those that now receive the serious attention of the public and the press. But, speaking gravely, the effect of what is uttered in a public audience is materially influenced by the external appearance of the speaker.

Invective, or the tone of command, is sadly out of keeping with a diminutive or feeble person. If the audience do not admire such an one for his spirit or cleverness, they are apt to treat him with indifference—sometimes with contempt—but are rarely awed or roused to determined action. If Dr Chalmers had been of this class it is questionable if he would have swayed his brethren or the destinies of the church, to such an extent. Had Andrew Thomson or Edward Irving been diminutive and feeble it is scarcely probable they would have been so generally regarded as “sons of thunder.” Luther, Knox, in fact most orators who have made any great impression on society, have been, physically, men of substance. The subject of our present sketch is not the least famed among our Scottish clergy, and he stands out conspicuously among his brethren in that respect. In fact, he is more like the incumbent of some goodly English benefice than the pastor of a Scottish dissenting congregation; and were he ambitious of renown he might so act upon the popular feelings as to make himself the centre of an extensive circle believing what he pleased, and acting as he dictated. Sabbath week he officiated in Nile Street Church of this city (Rev. Mr Fraser’s). After the usual introductory services, he gave out for text Ephesians iv. 7—“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” He commenced by saying—

The word “grace” often occurs in Scripture, and the term “grace of God” is frequently in people’s mouths, but though people use it they often take but little pains to ascertain the meaning of it. “Grace” means free unmerited favour, and is put in contradistinction to anything that a man has no right to. By common usage “grace” is applied, not to what bestows, but to the favour conferred by it. Money bestowed as alms is called “charity”—not the feeling which prompted the giving of it to the poor. Grace is a feeling, and cannot be given away. We speak of paying and receiving charity as if it were something that could be transferred from one to another. When we say, “unto every one of us is given grace,” we learn, 1st, That Christians are a people who live on God’s bounty—they have no good things of themselves. “In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” Neither can

they make anything that can be called goodness in the sight of God. The first lesson they learn is to receive—they have nothing to give—they live on the bounty of God. The first truth the Christian believes is that Christ is all things to him; and it is on the faith of this that a communication is opened between him and God. All Christians hold, first, their utter destitution. They can make no acknowledgment of him till they feel they are to blame for what is evil in their heart. They know that the thoughts and desires and sins are their own, and all they have to present before God. Like the dove they can alight there and find rest. Thus, seeing that Christ is all things to them, they are left in no uncertainty as to where they are to go. All then flows on, like a stream, from this source till they are free of their trials, till they enter into the kingdom of glory—and it requires this state of mind to give attention to the text. In all transactions between man and man there is always a weight or measure, without which it would be impossible for people to understand each other. God has settled a measure by which he gives to all who come. All who come find a measure by the gift, or the giving of Christ. God's giving Christ was doing a great thing, and this manifestation of God is the measure of his love in bestowing all things. “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son,” &c. It is altogether incomprehensible. What a wonderful thing it is that after perhaps 50 or 60 years' experience and prayer we can gather nothing to aid our comprehension of this love! It is difficult for us to realise the truth of this, it is so far beyond our comprehension—and when people grapple with it they feel the littleness of their own minds. In prayer people find this difficulty, because they cannot conceive of the vastness of the subject. The gift of Christ did not come from mere temporary emotion in the mind of God, but came burning through the ages of eternity. He is ever ready to give, and if it were necessary Christ would come and bear all again. Christ said to the woman of Samaria, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked him, and he would have given thee living water.” So may I say to you, “Whosoever will, let him come,” &c. Next—Besides being the

measure of God's love, the gift of Christ is also the measure of God's hatred against sin. It is necessary that we know something of this—they are combined in the character of God, and ought also to be combined in our minds, else we may be asking from God what he will not give. We know he will forgive sins. Perhaps there is nothing that so much tests the character of men as the feelings they have of God's hatred against sin. Some are troubled at it, but those who know aright the way of salvation love to think of God's hatred of sin, and have no dread—no recoiling from the great truth. We could not be saved, but for God's hatred of sin; for his hatred is the measure of his faithfulness in the scrutiny of our hearts. Circumstances make us differ in our ideas of scrutiny. If, in our houses, we are afflicted with poisonous reptiles we would seek out the man who could scrutinise them best. If, on the other hand, we were suspected of forgery, or having in our possession base coin, we would have a desire for the person who would search with the least scrutiny. So is it with the believing and unbelieving. Next—The gift of Christ is the measure of the holiness of His people. The measure by which one man deals with another is limited to power and inclination, but if there were a limit of God's willingness we were undone. People take trouble with each other. For instance, old people take trouble in teaching the young, but what is that to the teaching of a wayward heart? This is a work which no patience, no faithfulness, but God's can accomplish, and the gift of Christ is the measure of the extent to which God carries it on. Nothing shall be allowed to frustrate God's purposes—he will carry on the perfecting of the saints to the full consummation. Next—The gift of Christ is the measure of that zeal he bestows on the hearts of men—let this mind be in you, &c. Is it possible a human soul can take in such a measure of grace? The Bible says so—Walk as he walked. I would ask all to place themselves, as it were, at the judgment seat, and look back at their present life. It may be a life of ease, of attention to comfort, or it may be a life of sacrifice, becoming poor that others may be rich—of giving all for Christ. Which of them looks best? Surely it is sacrifice. If any man lose his life for my sake, he shall find it, &c. Learn

from this that you cannot make yourselves devoted to God by innate powers. If it is to be it is by the gift of Christ, and inasmuch as you ask, your life may be a stream of devotedness to God. Next—The gift of Christ is the measure of the spirit of liberality Christ bestows on his people. To be able to realise that “it is more blessed to give than receive” is difficult. The preacher here read from the 29th chapter of 1st Chron., where David and the people rejoiced because they had been enabled to offer willingly to the Lord. Worldly men may despise such a scene as this; but in the eyes of him who fashioned the heart of man and gave his Son, it is the noblest of all things that is here commended. Although this grace is given it is given because it is, and must be, sought. It has growth, and therefore, saith the apostle, Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Remember, then, you have to work it out, and, proceeding on the gift of Christ, you have a foundation on which to depend. Press on, then, towards the mark—keep your eyes on it. There are many difficulties in unlearning our own ways, and in learning the ways of God. You must work it out without intermission—ever on and on, depending on Him alone. God worketh in you. If you were to work yourselves you might rest, but God never stops. There may be some who have not entered into the condition to be justified and sanctified: to such I address a few words. You live in the world under a great fact—the incarnation of Christ. You are concerned in it for life or death—you have a great responsibility. You are treasuring up wrath if you live in the neglect of the Word of God. Even before the judgment come you are exposing yourselves to strong delusions—to believe a lie.

The preacher concluded with a few practical remarks.

This abstract presents little more than the framework or substratum of the discourse. In his introductory remarks the preacher illustrated, at some length, the meaning of the term *grace*—a term which, he justly remarked, like many others, frequently conveys to the mind no meaning, or a very indistinct and inoperative idea. This we should think no fault of the word *grace*, but of the mind that familiarises itself with the sublimest truths till they excite no interest. Some would-

be linguists and pseudo-philosophers, finding that the term grace had no effect on their own minds, at once concluded the fault was not in themselves but in the word, commenced to expunge it, and accordingly did expunge it. In a translation of the New Testament by a Mr A. Campbell, America, the word is absolutely banished, but we have not heard that his disciples are more devout than others, now they that talk of "favour" instead of "grace." Grace is a fine old word, whether considered etymologically or theologically. It carries with it a lusciousness and raciness which no substitute for it can convey to the mind, and we are certain that the subject of our present sketch would be the last to expunge it from his vocabulary. All he wishes is to convey to his auditors the full import of its big significance,—the grace, the marvellous favour, of a righteous and holy God to the sinful and insignificant creatures of his power. The preacher very properly explained this and other terms in his text before he proceeded to their discussion. Would all preachers show a like desire to use terms with a distinct and definite meaning, much misconception and mere meaningless jargon would be prevented. The discourse was one which displayed many excellent points. It is noticeable on account of its sobriety of thought and language. Those who heard the preacher half a score of years ago, and those who heard him on Sabbath week, were particularly struck with this feature. Then he displayed all the boldness of a Knox, or rather that of a Boanerges. At what were then termed revival meetings he was deemed one of the most efficient conductors. Like many others he then appeared to think he could reach the understanding through the feelings, and convert men by alarming their fears. Like many, he has found out that the kingdom of heaven comes not by observation—that it is not always introduced to the heart when Sinai thunders or when the flames of Tophet ascend. He has found out that Christianity addresses itself to the reason and intelligence of men, and through these awakens their fears, and hope, and joy, and hence, instead of presenting them with one or two insulated facts, he plies them with the whole counsel of God, and in the words of truth and soberness. Few preachers have had the same experience of the action of truth on the human mind. He has addressed

the shivering outcasts on the streets—he has preached Christ in the drawing rooms of the metropolis of the land—he has seen the poor trembling, the rich mocking, and the learned despising, as he spoke of temperance, righteousness, and judgment. He has observed the proximate and remote results of his teaching, and now brings to bear on his pulpit ministrations a vast and varied experience, and though men marvel less at his doctrines, they now believe and obey. We mean not to say that the special services of past days were productive of no good effect. Were we thus to speak living testimony would oppose us. Amid the tumult and excitement here and there, one and another first felt and feared, believed and obeyed, and their subsequent life attests their discipleship. But in how many cases has our preacher seen blossoms go up of dust—temporary alarm settle into permanent security—and the cry “What shall I do?” give place to the urgent inquiry, “Who shall show us any good? We deem the present pulpit appearance of our preacher of vast importance, not only in the abstract but relatively. We have before our mind's eye one whom circumstances threw among the gay and the fashionable—one whom conscience compelled to leave the ranks of fashion that he might permeate the lanes and reclaim the outcasts,—one whose genuine and hearty sincerity his bitterest enemy could never doubt—one who has perfected his theology, not in sectarian schools, but who went with his Bible as his guide to explore society in all its varieties, and who compared its revelations with man's necessities—who now kindled before his rapt audiences the fires that are quenched not, and anon made them listen to the unfathomable pangs proceeding from Calvary; and who, after a varied experience, and careful observations and deductions, has now obviously come to the conclusion that it is—not the thunder nor the thick darkness—not the most impassioned appeal to the feelings—not even the most elaborate reasonings addressed to the intellect—but the truth of the gospel—Christ incarnate—Christ obedient—Christ crucified—Christ glorified—and Christ on high giving gifts to men, which effects permanent good.

Another pleasing feature of the discourse was, its textual and consecutive character. We have heard discourses which

contained much truth—almost a whole body of divinity thrown together in one inextricable jumble, and all this supposed to be in connexion with the definite text. We say not but to certain minds this chaos may be presented with effect; but we should think these the exception—and that ordinary minds can make more of a textual discourse—of a train of thought, consecutively and logically arranged. In regard to those who admire chaos more than order, it is probably not much matter whether they are affected or not. Instinct is not reason, and those who possess the former in greatest perfection are generally most remote from the latter. It is understood that preachers address intelligent men, and that they count on the power of thought more than on the pictures of the terrible or even of the lovely. This preacher, who always gave indication of vigorous mind, now shows that the logical faculty is being cultivated. His illustrations now rest on a substratum of thought, and his discourse possesses a compactness and completeness as well as pathos and power. Mr Wight, always a popular preacher, is now a plain, practical, and useful minister. It is a remarkable fact, that, after he for a time left the people which he collected in Edinburgh, he was recalled, and now builds up and edifies the church which he gathered under very extraordinary circumstances. He may be said to have complied literally with the injunction of the Divine founder of Christianity—he went out to the “highways and hedges and compelled them to come in.” His progress as a preacher of Christianity in the streets of Edinburgh would itself make a most interesting and instructive chapter. Unlike the miserable creatures who make a mock of preaching by standing forth as apostles and delivering their message, and then send round their hats for a few pence, our preacher needed not such gifts. For years he preached without receiving one farthing from any quarter for his services. His standing in society was well known in Edinburgh, and secured for him respect among all classes. In the streets, and from house to house, did he pursue his disinterested services, and many a one was he the means of at least partially recovering to the paths of sobriety and industry. It was indeed a remarkable spectacle to witness one who moved in the fashionable circles of the city going at the command of

duty and visiting the miserable hovels with which even that city abounds, and plying the miserable dwellers there with fact and argument to persuade them to abandon their evil courses and to walk in the “narrow way.”

The good of which he was the instrument will be unknown till one day; but that the good was extensive there can be no doubt. There was a majesty and a mastery about him which seconded his instructions. Possessed of a fine and almost Herculean frame, and of dignified and easy manner, he appeared as one having authority. He entered the hovels of crime and poverty as one conscious he had a message to deliver, which would do good to the inmates in both worlds, and addressed them in such terms as the most ignorant could understand and the most wicked were unable to resist. How many of these creatures were raised to church-going society we know not, but one thing is evident that he has collected a large congregation, and presides over it with great acceptance. His voice is deep and somewhat hard, but, when he becomes animated, it swells out to a full and rich volume, yet it seldom is allowed full scope. His tall and flexible person gives a degree of elegance and ease to his manner, without appearing formal or artificial. He is seemingly in the vigour of manhood, with fresh florid countenance, which is set off to advantage with a plentiful supply of glossy brown locks. He is altogether “a man with a presence” that commands deference both in public and in private—from companions and friends as well as from strangers.

Mr Wight was designed for the bar, and received a suitable education for that profession. He had excellent prospects before him had he remained in that calling; but conscience dictated another course. After prosecuting that department about six years he commenced to preach wherever he could find hearers. He formed a church in Edinburgh in 1832, and along with it became connected with the Congregational Union in 1837. He left Edinburgh for Carlisle in 1843, and returned to his former people in 1846, among whom he still labours with success.

REV. GAVIN LANG,

GLASFORD, LANARKSHIRE.

THE philosophy is as shallow as the theology is false which pronounces man the creature of circumstances. To say that he is so far influenced by circumstances is merely to declare him a creature, for no one save he who makes and controls all things and events can be altogether uninfluenced by the scenes and the circumstances among which he is destined to move. And yet, after we make this admission, we are prepared to prove that mind in its humblest as well as its highest forms can rise nobly above the visible and urgent, and move on in consonance with its own exalted nature, more like the heavenly than the earthly. We do not mean to say that as man can rise above his position he need not be careful as to what relationships he may form, and what circumstances he may create. Though men have escaped the jaws of the lion they need not therefore lie in their path. Though Lot escaped the fate of Sodom, wise men will not follow such a choice as that which led him thither. Though the "three children" escaped the burning fiery furnace, the man's sanity is liable to question who will throw himself into the fire. Man may surmount all the favourable circumstances which others create for him ; he also may master many of the circumstances he creates for himself. Our thoughts frequently turn into the channel indicated by the above remarks as we listen to the clergymen of the different sections of the Christian Church. The circumstances over which they have no control are very different. Some of them are hereditary clergymen. They have been emphatically the sons of the church—cradled, like Samuel, by some old Eli for the

services of the sanctuary. They never heard of ought worth pursuing but the work of the ministry, and they never encountered a difficulty on their way to a pulpit. But there are others, and probably a larger number, who have reached their status by opposing themselves to their position. They were born in comparative obscurity, and in their early years looked on a clergyman as some unapproachable, unearthly phenomenon. They ranked him with such unearthlies as ghosts, hobgoblins, and witches, and avoided him as they would avoid the prince of darkness. These, however, by and by, coveted the character and office they dreaded, and wrought their way to the highest places of ecclesiastical control, and, like the "solitary monk who shook the world," make Christendom feel their inherent power. But besides this natural difference of circumstances, clergymen create very different circumstances for themselves. One sets up as independent of every one—civil and sacred. Cæsar and ecclesiastical dignitaries are alike shunned and avoided. They would as soon think of swearing allegiance in things sacred to the prince of the power of the air as to Victoria, or a General Assembly, or a Congregational Union. Their notions of the freedom and spirituality of the clerical functions are such that they shall be supreme and alone, and the flocks of such would do well to see to it lest such shepherds do not become lords over God's heritage. There are others again who cannot get themselves sufficiently ramified with controlling circumstances. If Jupiter thundered ecclesiastically they would tremble and obey. If Juggernaut required them to do duty at his car they would be the first to exclaim, "Here I am." If ecclesiastical functionaries are ambitious for control these are their willing and ready servants. And will any one be so foolish as to attempt to unchristianise the one for his independence or the other for his obsequiousness? These things, though opposite, are, after all, but the insignia. The best energies of the soul are still free, and the one and the other may bow to him whose kingdom is not of this world, and who must be supreme in the hearts and in the lives of all his faithful subjects. Last week we gave a sketch of one who not only refuses secular control in things sacred but had the courage to demand the

removal of secular control from the most sacred of all sacred subjects, the word of God, and we are now to give a brief account of one who is at the bidding of secular and sacred authority in things sacred; and is there any one, after he knows the manner of life and doctrine of both, who would dare to call their Christianity or their worth in question? We observe by our ecclesiastical gazette that the subject of our present sketch is a minister of the "National Church," and that he holds his living of one of the "Princes of the earth," but the following discourse shows that his "conversation is in heaven," and that the faith of prophets and apostles is his. That, in a word, despite of circumstances of his own and of others' control, he, as far as man can judge, is a faithful minister "of the New Testament." Last Sabbath he preached on Heb. iv. 14 to the end. "Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest," &c. The preacher commenced by saying—

The chapter from which his text was taken, consisted of two parts. From the beginning to the close of the 13th verse Paul discusses the rest which remains to the people of God. He shows the rest as applicable to believers in all ages, and that unbelief excluded the Jews from its possession. That rest is better than the rest of Canaan, as well as more durable. The second part of the chapter is our text, and in it Paul represents Christ as our great High Priest. We propose to consider, first, The character of Christ as the High Priest of our profession; secondly, To show that, on the grounds of this character, we are warranted and encouraged to approach to God; and, thirdly, We are to consider the end for which we are to approach the throne of grace. 1st, then, The character of Christ, as exhibited in the text, deserves our attention. The term, the great High Priest, was employed by the Jews to designate the chief priest who had the control over all other priests. The idea in the text is that Christ, as our great High Priest, has a name above every other name. The high priest of old annually went into the most holy place, but Christ our High Priest has entered heaven itself, and there appears in the presence of God for us. He is not a descendant of Aaron, but he is God's own Son—the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person; and, though thus high in rank, he

was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. He suffered in his body : he was hungry, weary, smitten, &c. He suffered in his soul. Persecution and insult did their utmost. He was called a Samaritan, a devil, and the nation cried out, Crucify him ! Who can express the depth of agony which tore his soul under the hidings of his Father's face ! Though without sin he was, beyond every other, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But, 2d, Let us consider this character of Jesus as the ground on which we are warranted to come boldly to the throne of grace. We are (1) to approach on the ground of the dignity and worth of our great High Priest. In the beginning of this Epistle the apostle dwells at length on the superiority of the Son of God above every creature in heaven and earth. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. But we are to approach (2) in virtue of what he did and suffered on our account. He yielded perfect obedience to the whole law—he submitted to the death of the cross. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. His sufferings were the brightest display of the divine perfections, and brought more glory to God than if all men had suffered for their own sins. A testimony was given of the evil of sin, and a way of access and acceptance secured. The tendency of his work is to give us hope and confidence as we approach to God. We approach God (3) because he has given ample testimony that he accepted the work of his Son in our room. Had his work not been accepted by God his sacrifice had been in vain. But God has not left the matter doubtful. Once and again a voice from the excellent glory attested that acceptance. His resurrection from the dead as well as his miracles are the best of all proofs : and who can doubt that acceptance when Jesus is now seen at the right hand of power ? But again, 4th the fact that our high priest is ever mindful of our interests—that he lives and reigns for the benefit of his people—is the greatest possible encouragement. Of old the high priest carried on his breastplate the names of the twelve tribes ; and now Jesus at the right hand of the Father has the names of all his people on his heart. Now that he is raised to heaven's highest honors he has still the heart of a sufferer, and on this account we may come

boldly, not presumptuously, not irreverently, but with confidence and hope. The 3d topic is, For what end are we invited to come to the throne of grace? We are to come "to obtain mercy." This lies at the foundation of every other blessing, for we can have no fellowship with God till we obtain his pardoning mercy. But after we have obtained mercy we need it again and every day. We need his mercy at all times and in all circumstances. We need multiplied pardons and daily sanctification. We are also to come to obtain grace to help in time of need. We are always to be in the position of seeking, for there is no period of our life but is a time of need. We should every day fall if God held us not up. These are the blessings in the text, and both will be granted in God's time and way. We are not straitened in God, we are straitened in ourselves. Let our wants be ever so many and urgent, we have only to seek, and we shall find; to knock, and it shall be opened. In conclusion, remember, first, that nothing is granted without prayer. Not the death of Christ—not even his intercession will bring blessings without personal application. His offices are only available when we employ him as our advocate. Hear this ye who cast off fear and restrain prayer. For you Christ's offices are ineffectual. 2d. Let those who do pray constantly keep their eyes on Christ as they approach to God. And, finally, in your approaches let all doubts be removed—waver not. There is power and will with God. Doubting prayer will never bring the blessing.

The discourse occupied forty minutes.

No one who knows anything of evangelical doctrine will doubt the orthodoxy of the above discourse. The preacher, instead of explaining away the meaning of his text, endeavoured to elucidate and enforce its bearing. His division, though it by no means exhausted the text, treated of several of its most important aspects. The three topics, indeed, embraced the leading ideas of the apostle, and presented them in a very practical and important form. The illustrations were of a very general character, and probably did not bring out in a very distinctive form some of the ideas fairly embraced in the preacher's subdivisions. The preacher used no notes. If he had notes before him he certainly referred not to them. He has not a

few of the requisites of an effective speaker. He seems to have unlimited confidence in his own resources. When the idea does not at once present itself in the form desiderated, he pauses without the slightest embarrassment, and can, quite at ease, return to an expression which he deems faulty. He speaks, too, with much firmness and decision. The hearer has the idea that he is listening to one who has fully made up his own mind and who speaks what he firmly believes. His voice, though somewhat hard, is not disagreeable, and though he modulates it not always according to the most approved rhetorical rules, it possesses considerable variety and compass. He certainly avoids a very common sin into which many clergymen are in some danger of falling—he is not a dull preacher. His manner is lively, and his matter is comprehensible. His sentences are short and simple almost to a fault. On the graces of oratory he certainly seems to have bestowed little attention. Like a greater preacher, it may be said of him that he knows no grace but divine. He is the firm and burly preacher of the times of John Knox. He will speak the truth “let whosoever list.” We do not say there was much philosophy in the sermon. We are certain there was no poetry, and yet we are satisfied that to many congregations it is calculated to be more useful than the fashionable sermons of the present times, and no congregation can listen to it without deriving benefit. We could not but think, in listening to his plain rudimental statements, of the benefits derived from such in different parts of the world. These statements are served up very differently by different preachers; but it is their own inherent force and magnitude which the heavenly agent makes effective. It is not philosophy—not poetry—not argument—not eloquence—but the doctrine of Christ Jesus and him crucified—which affects the heart and regulates the life. Christ was preached as the Mighty God and as the man Christ Jesus. Access to God was announced through his merits and mediation, and all that man needs to supply his present wants and future bliss was shown to be communicated in answer to prayer. Man, the creature of yesterday, was declared a sinner, but through an imputed righteousness he was declared the child of a happy immortality. Such views and thoughts when pro-

perly pondered invest man's existence with an imperishable grandeur, and raise him above the ills or joys of time. Parochial clergymen may, like Dr Chalmers in his early days, preach with vehemence and eloquence on the proprieties of life, but till Jesus and the resurrection are preached their instructions will not leave the slightest impression; but where the doctrines of the preceding discourse are taught, whether under the lofty turrets of the Parish Church, or by the unlettered preacher in a barn, the effects must be marked. Parishes may be bad despite evangelical instruction, but unless we know how much worse they would be were nothing but a dull rationality preached we cannot estimate the benefit conferred. It is evident that the subject of our sketch derives his chief power from his evangelical sentiment. A cold moderatism in his hands would scatter a congregation. It is the truth which he speaks that renders him an acceptable and useful preacher.

The subject of our sketch is a native of Paisley—the town which gave birth to Christopher North and others of well-known name. After receiving all the educational advantages that good town could bestow he passed the usual curriculum in Glasgow University. He was afterwards licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Dumbarton on the 30th April, 1824. In 1826 he became assistant to the Rev. Dr John Monteath, minister of the united parishes of Houston and Killallan. In 1828 he was elected by the congregation of West Kilbride to be assistant to the Rev. William Vessie, minister of that parish. In May, 1828, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Irvine to be minister of the Scotch Church in Shelburne in Nova Scotia; and in 1832 was presented, with the concurrence of the people, by Lady Mary Montgomerie to the parish and church of Glasford, in the Presbytery of Hamilton and shire of Lanark. Since entering on his present charge he has conducted a Sabbath school with much success. He regularly visits his parish every summer, and holds diets of catechising the young people out of the Shorter Catechism in different districts every winter, so that the parish is visited and catechised once every year.

In person he is about the middle height and of ordinary habit of body—neither stout nor thin. The frost of years has

already made its appearance, and thrown its venerableness on his remaining hairs. His countenance is calm and grave, and betrays much firmness and energy of character. He seems to have his heart in his work, and to be more anxious to profit his hearers than merely to tickle their fancy. From all that we have heard of him he is a zealous and painstaking parish minister, and his labours for nearly twenty years have been much relished among the numerous people of his charge.

Glassford or Glasford is a parish in the middle ward of Lanarkshire, extending eight miles in length, by an average breadth of two miles; bounded by Blantyre and Hamilton on the north, Stonehouse on the east, Strathaven on the south, and Kilbride on the south and west. A considerable portion of the land is cultivated. There is a small village in the parish on the road betwixt Kilbride and Strathaven.—Population about 2000.

JULY 20, 1860.

REV. WM. FRASER, M.A.,

FREE CHURCH, GOUROCK.

THE lover of nature and art could scarcely desire a better “post of observation” than a Gourock residence supplies. Old Ocean is seen quietly slumbering at the base of a hundred hills, whose everlasting fastnesses lift themselves in the distant horizon, where no sounds are heard but the music of the storms and the horn of the desolate mountaineer. The waters wash the old primitive rock on which the town stands, and open up a highway between old Caledonia’s chief city and the Old and New Worlds. In the distance, lovely villages sleep at the margin, and a thousand steamers skim along crowded with freights more precious than gold—with immortal beings hastening to another state. There is at least one man now on this commanding watch tower, who can feel the grandeur and the gracefulness of the surrounding scenes—one who sees the mighty deep mirroring the image of the Eternal—one who hears a voice in the rippling of the blue waters—in the sighing of the winds as they travel from shore to shore, carrying health and wealth to men of every nation—one who stands on the isthmus as between two worlds, and, on the one side, hears the hum of an ever-busy traffic, and, on the other, the anthems of a happy eternity—on the one hand, the artificial and conventional and changeable ; and, on the other, the everlasting calm of an unruffled, unchanging, futurity—one who draws inspiration from the stirring scenes around, and to whom the sea and the dry land are full of the memorials of the divine presence and power and love. We say the subject of our present sketch, though young in years, occupies the scene of his labours with

success and honour. He sees more than the rocks and looks higher than the hills—he has not a little of the intuition of the seer and the fancy of a poet, and holds converse with the unseen through the visible. Last Sabbath we had the happiness to hear him preach in St George's Free Church of this city. His forenoon text was James ii. 19—“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” He commenced by saying that

James addressed this Epistle to the Jews, whom he designates as the twelve tribes scattered abroad. The Epistle bears internal evidence that it was primarily meant for the Jews. He refers to those he addresses as in trouble, and so were the Jews for refusing to conform their worship to the Roman idolatry. The Romans cared not for the peculiarities of their creed, but wished to homologate all creeds with their polytheism. He warns the Jews of the danger of relying on the forms they maintained, without a corresponding faith and practice. Let us in referring more particularly to the passage before us, consider, 1st, The creed spoken of—the belief of one God; 2d, The commendation—Thou doest well; 3d, The fellow-believers in this creed—the devils; and, 4th, Its effects—the devils believe and tremble.

These ideas were vigorously illustrated at considerable length.

In the afternoon his text was Psalm xlvi. 4, “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.”

He introduced the subject by some remarks upon the pleasure that the feeling heart derives from the contemplation of particular localities, such as the plains of Sodom, Eden, an oasis in the desert, and the plains of Nineveh and Babylon. Jerusalem had no streams but Kedron and a little stream from Siloam, which was not a marked feature in the landscape. He then gave out three divisions:—1. Consider the city of God spoken of in the text—2. What that river is by which the Lord will gladden Zion—spiritual blessings and chiefly the refreshing influences of the Holy Spirit—3. In what respect this river makes Zion glad; and, in conclusion, he said we ought to ask ourselves if we have any refreshing influences—have we

groaned under condemnation, and striven to enter in at the strait gate? If we have not, we have not sought to receive the abiding Spirit. Those who consider religion a morose or gloomy thing let them look to the text, where there are not only streams of joy spoken of, but a whole river. We ought to esteem more the privileges we enjoy, and pray that they may be realised &c.

Though the forenoon sermon occupied but a short period in its delivery, we found some difficulty in giving anything like an adequate idea of it in our brief space. The discourse was full of sound and philosophic thought; but, probably, for a popular audience it was scarcely sufficiently illustrated. Nothing could surpass the neatness of the division or the aptness and force of the line of discussion pursued; but in every congregation there are minds on whom hard thinking, not popularised, is thrown away. For the sake of such it is well to be minute, and even repeat certain illustrations, that they may get a hold of the train of thought pursued. The very mapping of this discourse spoke significantly of the vigour and originality of the preacher's mind. Let us look again at that outline. The text was "Thou believest in one God, thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble." The outline in few words was the creed—the commendation—the companionship—and the effects or results. Never was a text more fully embraced nor more neatly divided. To certain minds the text itself is viewed as a kind of bugbear. They pass by it as quietly as possible, and are inclined to consider it a hard, if, indeed, it is a true, saying. But our preacher found in it a striking creed—a hearty commendation—a startling companionship—and an awful result. Nor did he fear to carry out the analogy hinted at in the text to its full extent. He conjured up fallen spirits—intelligent, daring, believing, and left them trembling. He described merely nominal Christians as in a similar position, and under a similar condemnation. He showed that their views were sound—their creed correct—their knowledge extensive, and yet they might be as hardened and hopeless, in their present state, as apostate spirits. He brought out in a very strong light the cutting irony of the text—an irony which praised professed believers for living like fallen angels.

Besides this boldness there was a strong vein of philosophical thought running through the entire discourse. But few minds would have seen the grounds on which the praise or commendation in the text rested. Believers in one God, he showed, did well, because they so far gave a faithful testimony to the unity of the divine nature—the one God. But their doing well in this particular did not exempt them from the crime of being unbelievers in the Son of God. From the first part of the discourse—the creed—it was obvious that he had studied Paley in the proper way. He has so mastered his argument as to be able to present it to his auditors in his own terse, brief, and elegant manner. Reading does no good but harm unless when such is the case. Many read till they become a sort of encyclopedia. They retain knowledge, but they never make it their own. Now they preach Paley, now Clarke, now Howe, now Brown, now Fuller, now Hall; but they have nothing of their own to give. The greatest favour that could be conferred on such would be to shut them up twelve years in a solitary room (*a la Bunyan*) in which there were no book and no companion, that they might be compelled to commune with their own minds. The old divines used to say that the “clean chew the cud,” meaning that persons should ponder what they hear till it becomes as much their own food as the food they receive, which becomes a part of their system. There is something extremely interesting in the ministrations of one so gifted and so young. While bursting into manhood his mind has been deeply imbued with divine truth, and solemnly inaugurated into all the mysteries of the Christian faith. Instead of consecrating it to controversy he has employed it in those great realities about which there is no dispute. It may be laid down as a primary fact that no good mind will exhaust its powers on controverted subjects. Good minds have been drawn into controversy, but they cut a sorry figure, and as soon as possible make a retreat. Controversy has always originated and been conducted by wrong-headed persons. It is the very element in which such enjoy life. As a general rule all hair-splitting theologians possess minds of a peculiar calibre. To see this illustrated we have to descend to some of the smallest and most recent religious sects, and these wrong-headed persons are

fancying they are on the way to heaven because they believe something that no other body believes, and because they teach what they have personally discovered. In opposition to these, well-constituted, well-regulated minds, like that of the subject of our sketch, occupy themselves with great facts and principles. The being and perfections of God—the fall and recovery of man—the principles of Christian action—and, above all, the grace and glory of Immanuel. He has no time for idle disputings. Truth presents not itself to him in angles, or through distorted media. He sees it in all its stately dimensions, and irradiated with all its heavenly lustre, and instead of criticising it he describes it—instead of correcting its errors he presents it to others in its varied aspects of majesty and grace, and in its most energetic relationships. Thus, for instance, in his illustration of the belief of one God, instead of starting off at the many points which have allured others, he kept on his steady, straightforward path—a path radiant with brightness. He did not set himself to prove what the Bible assumes—the being of a God—he strewed around him the memorials of God's presence and power, and made all feel that verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

We have seldom heard a sweeter voice, or seen a more unpretending manner than this preacher. He is modest to a fault. Guarded by a strict regard to propriety his gestures are severely chaste. During the preliminary exercises he scarcely moves a member or muscle. As he proceeds with his discourse his manner becomes more animated, but still there is almost no gesture. He stands erect and pours forth a rapid current of thought tersely and beautifully expressed. The matter is better than the preacher's manner. Though his voice is good he allows it occasionally to sink too low, gets into a monotonous current of utterance, and hurries from one period to another so rapidly that it is often difficult to tell where one ends and another begins. His illustrative powers are good, and his matter such as to make him a popular preacher; but much of its effect is lost by his rapid, unemphatic utterance. Some may affect to despise the education of the voice and manner, and consider it a matter of no consequence, but there is often all the difference at stake between

being intelligible and unintelligible, between striking the heart and beating the air, between a drowsy congregation and earnest listeners. This preacher has no excuse for his defects of manner, for, as we have said, his voice is good, his enunciation distinct, and occasionally he speaks with energy and effect. He has only to prepare still with care, and to study the communicative as closely as he has done the acquisitive, and he will have few equals as a popular and useful preacher. We observed him quote several passages not verbally correct, and also give one or two sayings as from Scripture, though they were not.

Mr Fraser's father was, some years ago (immediately after the passing of the Municipal Reform Bill), Provost of Inverness. He left Inverness several years ago, and is now in London, Canada West. His son, the subject of our sketch, was born in Inverness. He is the grandson of the late Rev. Donald Fraser of Kirkhill (by his mother's side), and consequently, nephew of the Rev. Alexander Fraser, at present Free Church minister at Kirkhill, Inverness-shire. Mr Fraser graduated at King's College, Aberdeen, in 1844, and studied theology chiefly under Dr Chalmers and the New College professors. He was licensed in February, 1849, by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, and assisted as a preacher in the Free Church of Port-Glasgow last summer. From October, 1849, he was assistant to the Rev. Dr M'Farlan in the Free West Church Greenock, till the time of his death, and remained with his congregation till April, 1850, and was ordained at Gourock on the 16th of May.

OCTOBER, 19, 1850.

REV. WILLIAM M. HALLEY,

DUMBARTON.

THERE are certain localities in which scenery and association lend enchantment even to the ministrations of the Christian teacher. Paul never preached with such power and pathos as, when standing on Mars-hill, he pointed to the altar of the unknown God. The preaching of Luther and Calvin and Knox derived much of its power from the idolatrous rites with which they were surrounded. Were our old cathedral still occupied as in John Knox's time, and the living John Knox located where stands his statue in the Necropolis, with what energy would circumstances inspire him ! As many past events wear the stamp of immortality, the intelligent preacher will feel their inspiration when near their scene. Amid what historical scenes do the subject of our sketch and his fellow labourers in that locality feel themselves as they stand up to speak to their people "the words of this life !" The associations of nearly two thousand years press themselves on their attention. They stand near the seat of the reguli of the Strathclyde Britons of very early times—near the collegiate church dedicated to St Patrick in the fifteenth century, where superstitions the most demoralising and services the most absurd were observed—near one of nature's fortresses, where, from a period coeval with the date of Christianity human passions and human powers have displayed their might and mastery. All that antiquity, valour, and royalty can confer renders the place sacred ground. Long has it been the centre around which have radiated the savage and the warrior, the brave and the gay. But there are still scenes which ought to fire with ardour and

enthusiasm. The everlasting rock is no longer the scene of valour and blood—it serves only as a memorial of events long departed; but nature still unfolds the lovely and the grand in that neighbourhood. How sublime should be the conceptions produced in the presence of the lofty Benlomond!—how vivid the fancy nursed in the neighbourhood of the Queen of Lakes, where so many lovely islands sleep on its quiet bosom! He possesses singular powers of resistance who is able to remain dull where nature is so vocal, and to express himself tamely where mountains and valleys, where lakes and rivers, assume their most imposing and significant forms. The subject of our sketch is evidently one who feels that the place where he is located is peculiar. He has attentively listened to the words of God as echoed from the everlasting hills and as they whisper through the deep, dark vales.

Last Sabbath afternoon he preached from the text, Psalm lxxii. 19, “Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen.” The preacher commenced by stating that a careful and comprehensive study of the Scriptures would convince us that revealed religion under the Old Testament and the New Testament was the same—that amid apparent diversity there was unity. The faith of Abraham and Paul was the same. There is a oneness, also, of religious character under all dispensations. The image of God—the new creature—is still before us. Whether among the Old Testament saints, or among the New, we witness the same faith—the same trust in God—the same hatred of sin. Were we to mention one peculiar feature in their character as proof of this oneness, we might state their ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men. This is distinctive of a saint. Sin, by quenching in the human breast the love of God's being and excellencies, has made man indifferent to the diffusion of his glory; while, by rolling a torrent of selfishness over the soul, it has narrowed the circle of our sympathies, and almost destroyed that charity which finds its most pleasurable exercise in the communication of good to others. The religion of God produces, however, a truly glorious change. Accordingly, the early Christians and apostles seem to have lived but for one end, the diffusion of the glory of God, in connexion with the

eternal salvation of man. They were the pioneers of a faith that would evangelise and bless the world. For this they strove, prayed, and died. The same spirit operated with equal power among the Old Testament saints. Under a dispensation exclusive in its character, they hailed with rapture the prospect of "the glory of the Lord being revealed, and all flesh seeing it." An illustration of this is afforded by the Psalm before us. It seems to have been the last composed of the odes of David. Standing upon the verge of the grave—with the shadows of evening gathering around—he seized his harp and broke once more into song. He beheld in vision the time when the spirit of Christ Jesus would enlighten the earth. Inspired by the scenes at which he had been looking, he lifted up his voice in prayer for the speedy realisation of this glorious vision. In the first place, Let me direct your attention to the specific object of this prayer, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Glory denotes the display of excellency. God is glorious independent of his visible works. Had this excellency never impressed itself upon a heart he would have been none the less glorious. But he makes himself known by his works. Everything around tells us of his glory. Who can return from his evening walk without being impressed by the objects around him? The mountains speak of his power, and the whole tells us of the presence of one great overruling mind. The stars tell us of the perfections of him who placed them there. Discovery has shown that each star which glitters above is a sun similar to ours, and that it sustains its part in the great plan of the universe. Providence, equally with creation, tells us his glory. In that stupendous mechanism of the universe not one wheel interferes with any other wheel, but each part is so nicely fitted and regulated that what appears confusion establishes the great fact that order is the first law of nature. Yet I cannot think that it was for the diffusion of these manifestations of the divine glory that the Psalmist prayed in the text. I look at it as referring to gospel times—the new world discovered and rebuilt—the power of Satan destroyed, and moral evil driven from the earth. He needed not to pray that God's creative and providential glory might be made known, for at the time he was writing the whole earth was full of this

glory. Yet amid the blaze of all that glory the human heart became more and more corrupt, and men more depraved. They changed the glory of God, and worshipped fourfooted beasts and creeping things. Man had retrograded under the mere teaching of nature. Idolatry the most brutal, and vice the most hateful, established their reign. The prayer, then, refers to the gospel of Christ. God's glory beams in all his works—here in feeble rays, and there in a burst of light; but it was reserved for the plan of salvation to exhibit a fuller view of the character of God than had been given, and to add the glory of his mercy to perishing sinners—called the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. It is not merely declarative but restorative. It is to awaken the hope and mould the character of man to the character of God. When men look to it they are changed from glory to glory. The manifestations of external nature have no power to change the heart. The New Testament only shows the power of God unto salvation. The glory of the gospel is its remedial character. It comes to save the lost, and shows us God reconciled to, and reconciling the world unto himself. It presents us with Christ's discourses—the noblest embodiment of Christian practice—and is the power of God unto salvation to all who shall believe on him. It was for the promulgation of this great system that the Psalmist prayed. He prayed that it might cast down superstition and restore the image of God. He omits no one, he admits the whole earth. This prayer is but the echo of another, to be found in Psalm lxvii.—“God be merciful to us, and bless us,” &c. In the second place, Some reasons why this prayer should be offered by us. 1. Its object is, to a certain extent, still to be realised. A change has indeed passed over the earth since this prayer was written. At that time the earth, with the exception of Judea, was covered with darkness; but many strange events have been witnessed since then. Christ has come, and the heralds of salvation have wandered over the earth sowing the gospel seeds. Small as were the means at first employed, how glorious have been the results? Many a barren spot of our world has been made to give forth fruit to the glory of God. Yet how contracted has been its influence compared with what it is capable of doing! It is like a light let into a dungeon,

which serves to exhibit the dreariness around. Were we lifted up so as to be able to contemplate idolatry, we would witness sufficient to convince us that Satan still reigns. 2. We observe, farther, that we are bound to offer this prayer because the honour of God and the happiness of man stand intimately connected with its realisation. A loyal subject is deeply concerned for the honour of his king, and a dutiful son is keenly alive to the honour of his parent, so should it be with Christians for the honour of God, who is both their parent and king. Our earth will yet become a miniature representation of heaven, when every tongue will celebrate the glory of God. Ought it not then to take the first place in our prayers? It did so with our Saviour. Witness his form of prayer to his disciples. Before he speaks of temporal wants he presents no less than three petitions which bear directly on the diffusion of the divine glory. The happiness of our fellow men ought to move us urgently to present this prayer. The connection between holiness and happiness is not more certain than between sin and misery. Modern infidelity has drawn ideal pictures of happiness apart from the gospel, but these pictures have only tended to make more evident the awful darkness in which the earth has been shrouded. (Here the preacher referred to the various systems of idolatry that have existed in different ages of the world). Do not all these things cry aloud to us to offer this prayer? 3. Again—we ought to offer this prayer, because we are encouraged to believe that it will be realised. The notion of combining all nations of the earth under one religion looks more like a dream of enthusiasm than the calm conclusion of a sound mind. There seems, at first view, little hope of such a result. The difference of languages, the customs and passions of men, all combine in one terrible phalanx to hinder the progress of the gospel. But tell us not that this state will not be realised! The language of prophecy, the design of the gospel, the interests of the truth, and the rights of the Saviour, require that the earth should be filled with the glory of God. Past events are full of encouragement. Think of the triumph of the cross—the progress of truth from Galilee to Athens, Ephesus, and Rome—to Africa, India, and the beautiful islands that gem the bosom of the vast Pacific—or

think of Christ with his diadem, having inscribed on it “King of kings and Lord of lords”—and our doubts shall be removed, yea, full-toned assurance shall take possession of our minds. See Isaiah xi. 6—9. The preacher then exhorted his hearers to combine individual exertion with prayer for this object. They could not be consistently dissevered. They were united in him who not merely prayed for the salvation of the world, but “went about continually doing good;” and in Paul, who, to fervent supplication for the salvation of Israel, added the devoted self-sacrifice of a laborious and useful life. Every Christian, as bearing the image of God, and constituted a witness for him, is bound to make his light so shine before men that others, seeing his good works, may glorify his Father who is in heaven. True it is, that after all, we must fall back upon the arm of Omnipotence, but we must never forget that we are fellow workers with God. Let us, then, so labour and pray that the earth may be covered with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

By the above outline it is apparent that the preacher took a wide and comprehensive view of the text, and examined it in a variety of aspects before taking it to the pulpit. One marked feature of the discourse was its individuality. It is evident that the preacher had not borrowed his thoughts from others, but allowed his mind free and untrammelled exercise upon the text until it had determined upon one leading idea; and this was again wrought out with the same independent freedom. The most eminent critics consider this to be one of the Messianic Psalms. Although a prayer for Solomon, a greater than he is shadowed forth by the Psalmist. Viewed in this light the text opens up a wide field for illustration. The earthly career of the poet King of Israel was about to close, and standing upon the verge of the grave, with prophetic eye he looks forward through coming generations to the reign of Christ, when the earth would gradually undergo great and purifying changes—when idolatry and all heathenish rites would disappear—when the empire of Satan would be overthrown—the fierce and cruel passions of men be subdued—and the world be surrounded with a new moral atmosphere. All these points were brought forward and illustrated with

much force and truth. Nor was the duty of Christians at the present day forgotten. Much of the bright vision still remains to be realised, and must be wrought out by human exertions. A great variety of topics were thus brought together, all of which were in strict conformity with the scope of the text. He seems to be at no loss for ideas, and therefore dwells no longer on one than is necessary to make it clear to the minds of the hearer. He never allows himself to run into a current of stereotyped sentiment or stormy declamation, which generally has no better effect than soothing the audience into sleep, or keeping them awake by the potency of vociferation. While he is thus clear and argumentative his discourses lack not heat or brilliancy. They are sprinkled with poetic gems which give relief and lustre to the substantial texture which they beautify, but do not flash and glare like the meretricious ornaments of a show room. We had no random sallies of brilliant meteors, but a calm, careful, genial discussion, maintaining its interest throughout, and giving internal evidence of an acute mind, a matured judgment, and sincere earnestness of purpose—of one who feels that there is practical truth in Christianity, and much responsibility in the ministerial office. His references to the works of God in the visible creation, though not spun out, were sufficient to show that he is one who can feel the silent eloquence of the starry sky, of the towering, rugged mountains, and of the fertile, flowery earth—one who can find “books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.” His prayers will bear out the same remarks. They flow on uninterruptedly, and are suited to the circumstances of his congregation. When he has said all he had proposed, and feels, he then stops and allows not his mind to go a wandering after something more to fill up the time. In the prayer reference was made to the forenoon’s services in such a manner as to restore in the hearers the same devotional state of mind, and thus connect the separate services as if no interval had occurred. He delivers his discourses with much animation, yet with little gesture, and not the slightest air of affectation. His voice is powerful and distinct, but at the same time it gives significant evidence that he, like a far-famed preacher of the same body,

indulges in frequent “pinches.” This certainly mars its tone and produces a degree of gruffness which nature did not intend it should have. He is of the average stature, apparently about 35 years of age, with locks and eyes dark as the raven’s wing, contrasting strongly with a pale though healthful complexion. His countenance is pleasing, and indicates much mental and bodily activity. We cannot say there is any predominating peculiarity in his manner or in the style of his discourses, to make him “a star that dwells apart.” He possesses well-balanced mental powers, and appears more anxious to do his duty in the ranks than ambitious for command, and such are the men who uphold the respectability and usefulness of their class. He is beloved by his congregation and respected by all parties in the neighbourhood.

Mr Halley was born in Kinross on the 6th October, 1814, and received the elements of his education at the Grammar School, Dunfermline. He afterwards attended the Universities of St Andrews and Edinburgh. After attending the Secession Divinity Hall taught by Drs Dick, Mitchell, Balmer, and Duncan, he was licensed by the presbytery of Edinburgh, in the spring of the year 1835, and was ordained in the autumn of that year (November 4) over the congregation of Markinch, Fife, when he was only in his 22d year. After labouring there for upwards of 11 years, he accepted a call from the (then) Secession Congregation, High street, Dumbarton, vacant by the removal of their former pastor, the Rev. Andrew Sommerville, to be a missionary agent of the Secession Church. The congregation, from having been vacant nearly two years, and the creation of the congregation of Alexandria in the meantime, which received a goodly number of its members, was considerably reduced. Since the 25th March, 1847, he has continued to labour in it with great happiness to himself, and with not a few evidences of good to others. The congregation slowly but steadily increased, and it has been his object in various ways to advance the cause of pure religion. By a Sabbath school, comprehending classes composed of persons of different ages, and by monthly evening lectures on important subjects, he is doing much good.

REV. WALTER DUNCAN;

PARLIAMENTARY ROAD CHURCH, GLASGOW.

AMONG the various influences which operate on the surface, and affect the character, of society there is one which reaches all classes, and yet has, comparatively, escaped observation. *Hereditary influence* is one of the most potent and universal, and yet its presence is seldom confessed and its operations seldom observed. Like other influences it works beneficially or disastrously according to circumstances. A long line of hereditary sovereigns has occupied the throne of England, and monarchists and republicans are busy balancing the advantages and disadvantages of such succession. We have hereditary lords, who rule hereditary bondsmen; hereditary landlords and hereditary beggars. This influence, however, is at work at every man's home and occupation. Hereditary trades and professions are much more fashionable than most suppose. Our sign boards mention "A. B. & Son" as often as "A. B. & Co." Where the trade or profession in which the majority are not assisted and succeeded by their sons? This professional descent rules senators and barristers, philosophers and clergymen. On inquiry it will be found that about one-half of the 3000 clergymen who hebdomadally minister to the people of Scotland are hereditary officials. Lately, at least, if not still, one half of our Glasgow clergymen are ministers' sons. Some of the clergy of a former generation have bequeathed to the world several clerical successors. In glancing at the list of the clergymen of the United Presbyterian

Church we miss the significant names of Erskine, of Fisher, and of Gillespie ; but we find in that church clerical descent operating beneficially, though it has allowed the founders of it to become unrepresented. There we observe the Browns, and Andersons, and Gilfillans, and Millars, and Duncans, retaining their position. These and probably many more, of whom we are at this moment oblivious, have doubled their numbers in the present generation. The fathers have given two, three, and, in the last instance, six sons to fill their places in the church. The witty writer who alleged that only the dull member of a family, unfit for anything else, was made a clergyman, did not announce a universal truth. Some of these mentioned are not altogether dolts, and at least their fathers, in some instances, had the merit of devoting the whole of them to the sacred work. Dr A. Duncan of Mid-Calder had the distinguished privilege of seeing all his six sons ordained clergymen, and, though he has now gone to his rest and reward, his six sons are all engaged in active service in the Christian church. Of these two are ministers in Glasgow—the respected minister of Duke street United Presbyterian Church, and the subject of our present sketch. It is certainly remarkable that all the six sons preferred the service of the gospel to the more lucrative employments which draw away so many of the sons of the more favoured of the clergy from the sacred profession of their fathers. The fact itself supplies almost an *a priori* argument in favour of the distinguished six. In these practical and utilitarian days, however, every man is judged of, not by what his father was, or did, nor even by the office which he may hold, but solely by personal or official merit. Nor have we any reluctance to come to this test in the present instance.

Last Sabbath afternoon the subject of our sketch preached on the text, Prov. xxvii. 1, "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." After some introductory remarks on the suitableness of the text as a subject of meditation at the commencement of a new year, the preacher proceeded to direct the attention of his audience to the four following points :—1. The fact here stated, that we are ignorant of futurity. 2. The probable reasons why we are kept in this ignorance. 3. The consolations which religion presents to us under it ; and

lastly, The practical influence which the contemplation of it ought to have upon us. 1. We are ignorant of futurity. This fact is expressed by the inspired writer in very strong terms. He represents us as being ignorant, not merely of the events of future years, or months, or weeks, but even of the events of the coming day. "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Precisely similar is the statement of the apostle James, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow." After pointing out the necessary limitation with which such declarations must be understood, the preacher proceeded to illustrate their truth by an appeal to past experience, by a reference to the unexpected and startling changes which have so frequently occurred in the history of nations, of families, and of individuals. How few of our anticipations in regard to ourselves have been realised! How different, in many cases, is the character we sustain; how different are the situations we occupy, and the connections we have formed, from the pictures which our imagination had drawn! How sudden and overwhelming have sometimes been the vicissitudes we have experienced! And as it has been, so it will be. The veil which hides the future from our view is as impenetrable as ever. No sagacity can enable us to foresee what even a day will bring forth. Before another sun has set we may hear of, or witness, events more surprising, we may experience changes more solemn and affecting, than any we have ever yet witnessed or experienced. 2. What are the probable reasons why we are kept in this ignorance of futurity? It has been often and justly remarked, that it is well for us that we are ignorant of the future. The knowledge we possess is suited to our situation and circumstances. Who among us could bear to have the future disclosed to him!—to see distinctly beforehand all the troubles and calamities through which he is to pass? The result of such a disclosure would be an utter prostration of soul. Equally injurious would be the effect produced by a foreknowledge of all the mercies which Providence has in reserve for us. Restless impatience and neglect of present duty would be the almost certain results. In keeping us ignorant of the future, therefore, God displays his wisdom and kindness. The preacher then proceeded to

show how well fitted our ignorance of what even a day may bring forth is to impress our minds with a conviction of the infinite greatness of Him of whom it is testified that "He knoweth the end from the beginning," and who says of himself, "I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." How overwhelming the contrast between man, striving, in vain, to penetrate the darkness which conceals the next hour from his view, and Jehovah, surveying at a glance, in calm and undisturbed majesty, all the events of everlasting ages! While our ignorance of the future thus reminds us of the infinite greatness of God it teaches us, no less impressively, our entire dependence upon him. We are prone to forget this great truth. In our natural condition all the anticipations which we form respecting the future, and all the schemes and enterprises in which we engage, are characterised by utter ungodliness. But when, in consequence of our ignorance of futurity, our anticipations are disappointed, our schemes frustrated, and our enterprises baffled, we are compelled to feel and acknowledge that we are not our own masters, nor the authors of our own destinies; that we are under the sovereign control of him who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." 3. What are the consolations which religion presents to us under our ignorance of futurity? Although we know not what a day may bring forth, although we are entirely ignorant of the events which are to befall us, yet if we are the people of God, we know enough to sustain and encourage our hearts in the prospect of them; we know enough to banish wholly from our minds all anxiety and alarm. For, in the first place, we know that whatever may be in the events of the future they are all under the entire control of our heavenly Father. He foresees all our dangers and all our wants, and he has provided for them all. Further, we know that under all circumstances, it shall be well with them that fear God. "All things work together for good to them that love him, to them that are the called according to his purpose." And, finally, we know that if we are his, there is awaiting us, beyond all the vicissitudes and afflictions of time,

an eternity of rest and happiness. 4. What is the practical influence which our ignorance of futurity ought to have upon us? It is in connection with this that Solomon introduces the statement in the text. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," he says, "for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." As an illustration of what is meant by boasting of to-morrow, and as a proof of the infatuation of such boasting, the preacher referred to our Saviour's parable of the rich man whose ground brought forth plentifully, and to whom it was said in the midst of his presumptuous anticipations, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." He then said, if there be any now present who have hitherto lived in the neglect of the concerns of their souls, and who have devoted all their time and energies to the world, under the mad presumption that there are many days and years still before them, let me entreat such to ponder seriously the simple but solemn truth stated in the text, "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Let me entreat them to trifle no longer in a matter of such infinite moment. The salvation of the soul is the grand concern, and ought to be the chief business of every man on earth. If the soul be lost all is lost. For, making the strongest possible supposition, a supposition so strong that no worldling can ever hope to realise it, our Lord asks "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Is it not then the height of madness for a being possessed of reason to acknowledge that the salvation of his soul is yet at stake, and that before another day has passed he may be beyond the reach of salvation, and yet to live on day after day, and week after week, without making one serious effort to secure that which his conscience tells him to be so necessary and so valuable? The gospel places salvation now within your reach, it declares the purpose and the plan of God for that end; it reveals an all-sufficient and most merciful Saviour, and it invites you to accept salvation at his hands as a free gift, a gift offered to every sinner that will accept it "without money and without price." Let every one, then, put the question to himself, "Have I obtained the salvation of my soul?—Am I prepared to stand, just as I am, at the tribunal of God? Can I say 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he will keep

that which I have committed to him against that day?" If not, let no time be lost, give to this all-important subject your instant attention, flee without delay, from the wrath to come, commit your souls now into the hands of Christ. The discourse was concluded with an appeal to the unconverted, urging them to embrace immediately the overtures of mercy in the gospel, seeing they know not what a day may bring forth.

This is a text that admits of many modes of illustration. The philosophic, the argumentative, or the sentimental, preacher could each find in it ample scope for his peculiar way of illustration. Had Dean Swift chosen it he would, in all probability, have treated it somewhat in the manner of the text, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of mirth." After reading it to his audience his first sentence was, "That I deny." Mr Duncan is, however, far too serious a preacher to indulge in anything that partakes of oddity or levity. He chose it as a text suitable for reflection at the commencement of a new year, and in our opinion his mode of illustration was not only in strict conformity with the scope of the text, but eminently appropriate to the end in view. New-year days may be considered as milestones on the way of time, and though mankind know not exactly how far they have yet to travel, they may know at least how far they have travelled, and the appearance of the milestone tends to make them reflect upon their progress. All wise travellers will at that point as it were draw forth their time-piece, weigh in their minds their satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress during the past, and renew their efforts to a still more worthy accomplishment of what is before them. The uncertainty of future events was then a suitable theme for the occasion. The preacher explained the literal import of the text, as having reference to the contingencies of human life. Some things we do know—things that are subject to the laws of nature, such as the rising of the sun, summer succeeding winter, &c. In such cases the past is the faithful indicator of the future; but human relationships, actions, in short, the future history of man is enveloped in darkness. The occurrences of to-morrow are as much hidden from human vision as are the events of eternity,

and seeing that man's prescience is so very limited, it becomes every one to be prepared for the worst that can befall him. Implicit reliance upon God, and belief in his word are the only safe guarantee which men can have that all will be well whatever may occur. All these points the preacher amply illustrated in language elegant and nervous, and in a manner that must have impressed all who heard him, that he spoke not so much for the sake of exhibiting fine sentiment, as through genuine love for those under his ministrations. The discourse is one of the few which we have to characterise as a model one. The few introductory sentences strikingly opened up the subject—the division was textual, philosophical, and comprehensive—the illustrations were brief, pertinent, and practical, and the peroration urgent and effective. The style was neat, terse, and eloquent, and the sentiment scriptural, and pervaded by an earnest spirit. We have heard him frequently, and the same practical style, and earnest and affectionate manner, characterised all his discourses. He is evidently one who loves the office of the ministry, not simply for the respectability of the profession, but through a desire to do his Master's work. He never rails—he never assumes the tone of command—for harshness of any description seems foreign to his nature. His rebukes are always in the spirit of meekness, and if it be possible to rouse in him a feeling of indignation, we cannot conceive it assuming a deeper tone than that of gentle complaint. He is evidently a calm observer of what is going on in the world, and occasionally refers to passing events, but not in a spirit of partizanship—all is kept in subjection to the benign spirit of the gospel. Upon doctrinal points he gives his own views, and endeavours to make them clear to the comprehension of his audience, but seldom drags forward those of others for the sake of combat. His manner is no less pleasing than his matter. His voice is not powerful, but it is clear and musical, and characterised by what is called a *burr* when pronouncing words which contain the letter *r*, which adds rather than detracts from its agreeable tone. His language flows on uninterruptedly, each word is distinctly and firmly pronounced, and every sentence finished

with ease and elegance. His gestures and movements seem to spring naturally from the fervour of his feelings, and are not at all obtrusive, violent, or affected, yet under all this it is apparent that speaking, especially in so large a church, occasions him considerable physical exertion. In person he is rather above the ordinary stature, and appears to be about 40 years of age. His florid complexion gives him a youthful appearance, but the few grey hairs that are seen mingling with his dark locks indicate the midnight oil. His features are regular, and his expression mild and engaging. In fact, it is difficult to find one assailable point either in his matter or his manner. His diction is classical and elegant. He holds no novel views, utters no odd or startling expressions, but preaches the gospel with an impressive earnestness beyond that of most preachers. Indeed, this mildness of manner militates in some degree against the force and depth of his thoughts. The philosophical, the logical, the sentimental, and the historical, are fused, melted down into one pure stream of benevolent feeling. In this he scarcely does justice to himself. A little more abruptness would make his ideas more palpable and striking, and would cause them to make a still more marked impression on the memory of his hearers. As things are, however, he is a preacher of more than ordinary abilities, and it is certainly to be deplored that he should be allowed to remain without the benefit of a more extended sphere of co-operation. As we have said he has a large church capable, we should suppose, of accommodating from 1100 to 1300 persons—and, what is of more consequence, it is well filled by a very respectable audience. Cold as the day was on which the above discourse was preached there could not be less than 1000 present.

The subject of our sketch is a native of Mid-Calder, and the third son of the late Rev. Dr Duncan, professor of Pastoral Theology to the United Secession Church. All his brothers, five in number, as already stated, are ministers in the United Presbyterian Church. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and in the Theological Hall of the United Secession Church under the late Dr Dick. After being licensed to

preach the gospel by the United Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh, he was ordained minister of Duke Street Church in 1830. The congregation now worshipping in Parliamentary Road Church being formed in 1837, Mr Duncan was invited to become their pastor. This invitation he accepted. The church consisted at first of about sixty members. There are at present above 700, and there are about 900 seats let. There are two Sabbath schools in connection with the congregation ; one meets in the church, the other in a house fitted up for the purpose in Havannah Street. The attendance at the latter is very large. Till lately the congregation supported a missionary, and propose to do so again after they have liquidated their debt. Mr Duncan is much beloved by his people, and respected by all classes.

JANUARY 12, 1850.

REV. JOHN M'GREGOR,

STRANRAER.

THE soul of man often asserts its superiority to the material and transitory. Even in laughter it is frequently sad. The revelations of the telescope and microscope may amuse it for a time, but it soars away far beyond the reach of human eye, and seeks a resting place among the infinite and eternal. The fair things and the lovely of creation were never designed to be viewed as ultimate facts. They are merely figures by which the spiritual is brought near to man. The tempest howls not to disturb nature's fair face—it is the emblem of those deep and dismal perturbations of the human soul which have blighted earth and kindled hell. What are these stars above but the eyes of God looking down on his creatures and beckoning them to happier spheres! What is winter but the representation of a soul "without God"—dead, cold, dark, and cheerless! Men have often aided to perfect the great system of symbol by which God speaks to man. Romulus founded a city because he would be a ruler—God allowed him to found that city because he wished a new illustration of his church. The time comes when Babylon and Nineveh and Tyre—yes, is already come—when they are merely handmaids to religion—they are mere types of the city of God. But for great cities the church of God would never have been represented to us under such figures, and but for the church of God there never had been great cities. These cities are designed to cry aloud to man of the heavenly city—the new Jerusalem. No one in his senses will suppose that of themselves they are worthy of man. Can the human soul be satis-

fied with polished stones—with burnished gold? Will a soul take its ease because it has goods in granaries laid up for many years? Were man only a clod he might find enjoyment in the material, but, because man possesses a spiritual existence, he utterly contemns all that the world calls great. Our thoughts were led into this channel by a visit to Shamrock Street United Presbyterian Church last Sabbath. The preacher directed attention to the city of God, and as he proceeded the cities and kingdoms of this world dwindled into insignificance. The earth's greatness and grandeur fled before him, and heaven, with its tranquillity and spirituality and enjoyments, seemed to come down to earth. The material lost its beauty and its permanence, and the spiritual assumed forms of beauty and loveliness never equalled by the forms that press on the external vision. The great city where he stood lost all its material greatness, and nothing seemed true but heaven. The church appeared as a bride adorned for her husband entering into the king's palace, there to abide for ever. His text was Psalm lxxxvii. 3—"Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God." He commenced by saying—

There is scarcely any folly more epidemical than that ridiculous vanity which leads the inhabitants of a particular place or country to magnify its advantages and to exalt its praise above all others. This is so often done, with so little reason or so much exaggeration, as to excite the scorn rather than the admiration of those who listen to the panegyric. For instance, who does not smile at the absurd pretensions of the ignorant Chinese, when they claim for their country the proud appellation of the Celestial Empire—when they give it a history antecedent to the Mosaic date of the creation, and when they designate as barbarians all the other nations of the earth? Who does not condemn the pride exhibited by the haughty Turk, when, as he passes through the streets of Stamboul, he spits on the passing Christian, and denounces him as a giaour, or infidel dog? Who does not pity the prejudice of the poor, shivering Greenlander, who, whilst he eats his food out of the same dish with his dogs, cannot utter the word foreigner without giving to his countenance an expression of pity and dis-

dain ? This spirit of patriotism is natural and laudable within proper limits. There were a nation and a city which, deservedly, were renowned beyond all others. That nation was the Jewish, and that city was Jerusalem. It is of this city David says in our text, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God." It was beautiful for situation, remarkable for its buildings—containing the royal residence and the holy temple in which the King of glory dwelt. There David tuned his lyre to sing for the people of all times. There Isaiah uttered his sublime prophecies of a coming Deliverer. There Solomon wrote his wisdom—there Jeramiah breathed his deep lamentations. There Ezekiel poured out his deep dark allegories; and there, above all, the redemption of the world was consummated. There the Prince of life was crucified, and there he sent his Spirit at Pentecost to found his New Testament Church. Such was Jerusalem—but her glory is departed. The historian now dwells on her sins and her plagues. Yet Jerusalem is not utterly forsaken. There are promises of a restoration. Meantime another city has been founded, of which more glorious things have been spoken than were ever written of Jerusalem of old. By the city of God in the text we understand the Church of Christ in all circumstances, ages, and climes. All who worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Mangled and shattered as that Church may be in its aspect to man, God sees it one holy united city, which is the object of his peculiar care and of which glorious things are spoken. In the sequel we shall direct attention to the Founder, the privileges, the perpetuity, and prospects of that city. First, We speak of the Founder of this city. The city hath foundations, its Builder and Maker is God. He who laid the earth's foundations and garnished these heavens is its founder. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are all specially engaged in this building, but it is the more especial work of the Son. (The preacher illustrated this idea at considerable length.) But, 2d, Glorious things are spoken of the privileges of this city. In every city of any note there are certain privileges connected with citizenship. Jerusalem had special privileges. The citizens could sing, the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places. It was

mentioned with honour "That this man and that man were born there." The name of a Roman citizen protected him over half the world. Paul on more than one occasion had the advantage of it. But the honours of Rome sink into insignificance when compared with those of the city of God. Zion's immunities and privileges stretch forward to eternity. Every citizen of Zion is freed from condemnation. They reach not perfection here, but even now there is no condemnation to them. Every citizen of Zion is free from guilt, and no longer in peril of condemnation. They are justified freely from all things. I ask those who are present how highly they value the blessedness of that man whose iniquities are covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute sin? But, farther, Every citizen enjoys communion with God. God, indeed, dwells with men on earth. They have all access to the holiest by the blood of Jesus—they have access by one Spirit to the Father. Our fellowship, they can say, is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Earthly pleasure is often unsatisfactory, and always uncertain. May his money perish with him who prefers the society of men to the fellowship of God. Solomon's servants were pronounced happy because they heard his wisdom, but Christ's servants hear his word and also taste his grace. A king rewarded two of his favourites, the one with a kiss and the other with a wedge of gold, but the one with a kiss considered himself the more honoured. But, again, every freeman of this city has the certain hope of victory over death. Death is the king of terrors, and many are all their lifetime subject to bondage through its fears. Before him the face pales, and the voice falters, and the heart faints. How privileged, then, is the citizen of Zion, who is completely delivered from fear! In yon chamber of death the dying Christian thinks not of death but of death's Destroyer—not of the pains of death but of the victory over it. Even when dying he can sing, "O Death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!" Besides, every citizen possesses the hope of glory hereafter. His happiness is not perfect here. He would not live always. Yonder he is ruler of many cities. Here he reaps, and there he gathers his harvest. Here he has the earnest—there the inheritance. "Eye hath not seen

nor ear heard," &c. Jesus is his portion. He drinks at the fountain of bliss, and feasts for ever on his love. 3d, Glorious things are spoken of the perpetuity of this city. The empires and cities of this world have their allotted time—some longer and some shorter. Where now is Babylon, the glory of the Chaldees' excellency? Wild beasts dwell there—satyrs dance there. Where now is Nineveh, with its walls and gates? Where is Jerusalem itself? But the Church of Christ will continue on earth till He come again. She is impregnable and imperishable. Her glory cannot be tarnished. Pagan and Popish power have been arrayed against her. The handful of corn on the mountains shall shake with fruit. We are walking in the shadow of the last time. The world shakes with coming change—the night is far spent, the day is at hand—the first rays of millennial light will ere long fall on the world. A willing people from all lands will come in the day of power—from every place incense and a pure offering shall ascend to the King of heaven. Soon will be heard the shout, Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Yet this glorious state will partake of earth, and the church's condition will be perfect and pure only in heaven. Its heavenly state John thus describes. (The preacher here read the first part of the 22d chapter of the Book of Revelation.) He then said that comment would only mar such a description. In conclusion, Are you citizens of Zion? Are you members of Christ's mystical body? It is not enough to be hearers of the Word, you must be doers of it also. Resolve that God's people shall be your people. Follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

The discourse occupied about fifty-two minutes, and the service an hour and a half.

In the afternoon he preached on the ascension, Luke xxiv. 50, 51. The discourse was one of equal excellence. It occupied about fifty minutes, and the service, according to the invariable practice of the preacher, was about an hour and a half.

The discourse given is one of great merit. The introduction was very superior, bringing out strikingly the feeling of patriotism in every human heart, which gives force to the figurative language of the religion of the Bible. Instead of destroying human feeling and aspirations, it trains and perfects

them. If man will love his country, that feeling is turned to Zion ; if he will appreciate the privileges of citizenship, Zion invites his ambition. While the preacher's remarks rebuked exaggerated and ignorant attachment to locality, he presented to his hearers a city and a country towards which desire can never be too strong nor veneration idolatrous.

The general divisions of the discourse were exceedingly happy. Zion's Founder, privileges, permanence, and prospects, very neatly and logically embraced the leading ideas which the text and context suggest. The plan thus neatly laid down was admirably followed up. We need not say that the man ignorant of geography and history would make but a miserable attempt at illustrating such particulars. The figures of the Bible, though simple, can be understood fully only by those conversant with the history of the world. He only can fully speak of the glories of Zion's Founder who knows all that the world calls fame in regard to the founders of other great cities. So also is he only prepared to speak of the privileges of Zion's citizenship who is familiar with the immunities other cities have afforded. The difference between an intelligent and ignorant expounder of the Bible is specially apparent in treating such a subject as this. The ignorant expounder can do nothing more than compare similar passages, which he can do little else than repeat. The intelligent expounder enters into the meaning of the figure and exhibits its beauties. Numerous are the allusions to the Church of God as Zion, and he only sees the beauty of these who, like our preacher, can command around him the glories of all cities, and show the superiority of this city—the New Testament Zion. In illustrating his particulars the preacher showed his acquaintance with history ancient and modern. He spoke of countries and kingdoms and their glory, and then marred that glory by dwelling on the glory that excelleth. He, moreover, showed an intimate acquaintance with the human heart—with its desires, ambition, aspirations, hopes and enjoyments. At every step of its progress he wrote vanity on all the earth calls great, and immortality on man's duty and destiny. Nor did he make any pedantic display of his information. He gave no details, but mere results—he gave none of the secrets of the study, but merely the re-

sult of its labours. Though he used no notes he spoke with much propriety and fluency. Both in reading and speaking he puts forth great energy—not in the way of crying or shouting, but in putting proper emphases where these are required. His gestures are generally proper, and are the expressions of his thoughts. His language is always chaste and neat, and occasionally eloquent and elaborate.

His mode of conducting the introductory service on the occasion in question gave a false impression of the preacher. His sermon we regard as a model one, but there are not a few whose manner is superior.

In person he is of the middle size, with a healthful complexion. His brow is high rather than broad, and is circled with a plentiful supply of light hair. In speaking, his features reminded us of another distinguished clergyman who laboured for a time in the same town which is the scene of the labours of the subject of our sketch—we refer to Dr William Symington of this city. Despite certain peculiarities of manner there are few preachers so popular, and so deservedly popular. If he has not studied the graces of the orator he has studied his matter. Instead of dull and incomprehensible abstractions he addresses himself to the feelings and experience of his auditors. He is too much of an observer to suppose that abstract details of doctrine will either please or profit men—he has studied his Bible and the page of history, and there has found what at once touches the heart and informs the understanding. He does not satisfy himself by reciting before an audience a string of passages brought together by the help of a Concordance, and more remarkable for their analogical sound than their sense. He fairly attempts to get at the mind and meaning of the sacred penmen—to decipher their bold and beautiful types and figures, and to see what they contain of great principle. His illustrations were particularly appropriate, and showed him to possess a mind vigorous, analytical, poetical, and logical. But the great beauty of his discourse was its high spiritual tone. Zion he did not reduce to a millennial country—earth a little improved—he showed its source and destiny to be from above, and its privileges not that of an earthly policy but of heavenly origin and character. He walked about Zion with firm

step and clear eye, and marked well her bulwarks, and claimed, for her, her character and immunities as the city of the living God.

Mr M'Gregor is a native of Glasgow, and studied in what was then called the Grammar School (now the High School). Three of his fellow pupils—Messrs M'Dougall and Thomas, and Dr Newlands, became clergymen of the same church. After he attended that school he studied in the University, and, when he had completed the classical and theological courses, was licensed by the Relief Presbytery in October, 1823. It is a remarkable fact that the first pulpit he preached twice in on a Sabbath was that which he occupies at this day. His first appearance made a very favourable impression in Stranraer, and in January (some two or three months after) he received a call from his present charge, and, having accepted it, he was ordained in May. The choice he made astonished not a few—the church was but newly formed, and he was a very young man (only about twenty-two); and it certainly was a considerable risk to commence in such circumstances. The young men chosen to the eldership were of the right sort and drew well with their young pastor, and some of them remain still in office. The church gradually increased, and is now as large as can be expected in a town of some five thousand of a population, divided among ten churches. He preaches twice every Sabbath, and has a monthly Sabbath evening lecture, and on that Sabbath he preaches three times. There are Sabbath schools and a Missionary Association connected with the congregation, and these are liberally supported. Mr M'Gregor does not confine his efforts to his own church or to his own denomination. He seeks the good of the town, and takes an active part in all public matters. There is no clergyman better known in the town, and none more influential or widely respected. His people are greatly attached to his person and ministrations, and have shown him much sympathy while he has passed through a series of domestic trials seldom equalled. He has been twice married and twice widowed. Of a family of eight children by his first wife only one survives, and the second partner of his lot only lived a few months. Yet, amid all these bereavements, he has been a hard student and a suc-

cessful minister. Several of his discourses have been published, and these display a ripe scholarship, and very extensive reading and research. On making inquiry at those who know Stranraer, we were rather surprised to find that a clergyman of such worth should have been allowed to toil in that town some 27 years *without a manse*. What mean the good people of Bridge Street Church by this neglect? Are there no stones and lime and wood in Stranraer? We hope to hear soon of a convenient, comfortable house being provided for their excellent and active minister.

JANUARY 11, 1851.

REV. ROBERT WATSON,

WEST CHURCH, STIRLING.

THE subject of education is at present exciting a wide interest in our own and other countries. The necessity of educating the people is now admitted; and however little the admission may appear, it is an important matter. But lately education was denounced as a very dangerous thing. The pulpit and the press admonished the friends of education of the dangers which would arise from allowing the millions to intermeddle with knowledge. It was then sagely held that as the head was improved the hands became useless—that as the mind was informed the body would become inert and inactive. The electric touch of knowledge, it was surmised, would make the implement of labour fall from the hands of the workman and artificer; and, instead of the noise of skill and labour, we should have a world of idle sentimentality or universal rebellion. The extinction of such avowed opinions is, we allege, a most important step in the right direction. The evil and the cure are admitted, and men have only to determine the mode of cure. And yet, though all declared objection to educating the millions has ceased, there are still thousands who virtually contend for the darkness instead of the light—for inertness instead of activity. Mind is awaking; but not a few wish and love to slumber. With grief we state that despite all that has been said, and justly said, in favour of the Scottish pulpit, not a few of its occupants are still unaware of the times. They sleep as did man a century ago, while light from heaven streams around them, and calls on them to awake and arise. It admits not of doubt that in many instances the pulpit is behind the age. The occupants of the pews are more intelligent than the occupants of the pulpit. The mode of training the

ministry is in danger of setting to a perpetual sleep minds of sluggish mould. A system of objective truth is studied and learned, which lays but a feeble hold on the objective mind. The student has learned his lessons—the candidate has received holy orders—the scholar has reached the height of his ambition—the divine the goal to which his efforts tended—and from the pulpit, Sabbath after Sabbath, there proceeds not the vigour and freshness of thought—not the energy and activity of mind—but the dull repetition of stereotyped doctrines, without a single flash of genius, or a single sentence of vigorous thought, to relieve the monotony. That in many parts of the country the people are more intelligent than their spiritual guides admits of no doubt. They can learn more from one number of a weekly periodical than from a whole year's prelections from the pulpit. While the minister repeats his dull lessons the people either hear, from a strong sense of duty, or despise him, or absent themselves to arouse him. The service such goes through might be done by steam, and done better. The tongue is at work while the head and heart within neither stir nor feel. There are, however, not a few alive in the pulpit, as well as in the pews, and despite the soporific effects of endowed sectionalism, there are very many who belong to such, who know the signs of the times, and are not like men who dream. Among these is the subject of our sketch. In his nervous frame is lodged a mind of great activity and a heart of deep stirrings. He belongs to a class of preachers who are as yet more wondered at than admired, but who, by and by, will be the only preachers followed or even tolerated. The soundness of his judgment may sometimes be called in question. His fancy may not be all that could be desired—his style may not be so pure as a refined taste desires—his pronunciation may be faulty and careless—but there is what more than compensates for, if indeed it does not cause, these defects—there is a mind of determined energy—an imagination that will revel in the beautiful—a judgment which will be called into vigorous exercise. Lately we heard him, with much pleasure, deliver a discourse on Gen. xvi. 13—She called the name of God who spake to her, “Thou God, seest me.”

The preacher commenced by saying that the book of Genesis contains the most ancient and most authentic history in the world. Several writers of antiquity have professed to treat of the early ages, but they mixed facts with the fabulous, so that no reliance can be placed on their narration. The book of Genesis goes back to the remotest times, and is entirely free of the fabulous. The record bears the strongest marks of authenticity, and reveals the domestic life of the patriarchs. The reader is conscious he has real life before him as he goes over the many incidents of patriarchal customs presented before him. Here we have one of the most striking and instructive of these incidents. We shall consider, 1st, The occasion on which the words were uttered; 2d, The doctrine here confessed; and, 3d, The practical uses to be derived from it. First, The occasion on which the words were uttered deserves attention. Sarah, despairing of becoming a mother, suggested to Abraham the propriety of his taking Hagar, her handmaid, to wife. Abraham, without taking counsel of God, rashly followed her advice. Both, however, had deeply to regret their error; as it gave rise to much domestic unhappiness. Hagar, forgetting the respect she owed to Sarah, conducted herself so as to offend. Brooking ill the insolence of her handmaid, Sarah complained bitterly to Abraham. Having obtained his permission to deal with Hagar as she pleased, she began to pursue such a course of stern, systematic severity that Hagar fled from her presence. Rather than submit any longer to this harsh treatment she preferred abandoning Abraham's roof and encountering the horrors of the inhospitable desert. Wandering, and weary and solitary, she at last sat down in the howling wilderness by a fountain of water. Far away from every human being and abode, she made the wilderness resound with her wailings, while her tears bedewed the ground. She felt her condition the more that there was no hand to help her. How intense was the agony of her distress as she found herself alone, exposed to the terrors of the solitary wilderness. And yet she might have known that she was not alone. She gave way, however, to her grief, and forgot the memorials of the presence of Omnipotence. The grass that grew at her feet, the flowers that bloomed around her, the fountain that murmured at her feet

all told significantly that God was there. And yet she remained insensible for a time of the exhilarating fact, till God at length revealed his presence and spoke to her. The Angel—the uncreated Angel—commanded her to return to her mistress, and seek that relief in submission and self-denial which she had failed to obtain in her haughty overbearing conduct. She now called the name of God who spoke to her “Thou God seest me,” and the well whose cooling stream had refreshed her she called “The well of him who lives and sees me.” It is most probable that Hagar was brought up in the family of Abraham, and was taught the knowledge of the true God; but men may know God sentimentally and not practically. At length when Hagar thought no eye saw her, and no heart felt for her, and no hand helped her, she recognised the eye of God beaming on her and observing all her distress. But, second, We notice the doctrine here confessed. The doctrine is God’s omniscience and omnipresence. God is a spirit; but certain bodily parts are ascribed to him to convey to us an idea of his perfections. His hand means his power or omnipotence. The ear of God teaches us that there is a way of access to the Divine mind, as the human ear is one of the avenues to the soul. The eye of God means his omniscience. He who made the eye shall he not see? Hagar’s eye could not behold the invisible God, but she knew his eye beamed on her path. The doctrine of God’s omniscience is revealed in the Bible. It was revealed to the patriarchs, and has been republished from age to age. Every creature may say of God, “Thou God seest me.” At all times, and in all places and circumstances, God is with us. His immensity fills the universe. From his piercing glance there is no possible escape. Can any hide himself in secret that God cannot see? Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. The ungodly try to persuade themselves that God sees them not, but they will find at last that all their ways have been before him. From the place of his holy habitation he looks down and sees all the children of men. Neither is there any creature not manifest before him, for all things are naked and open to his eye. So perfect is his knowledge that hell is naked before him, and destruction has no covering. (The preacher

here quoted a considerable portion of the 139th Psalm in proof of God's omniscience.) To this testimony we might add the evidence of reason. The kingdom of nature indicates everywhere his presence and agency—the glories of the sun in the heavens, the revolutions of the seasons, the beauty and brilliancy of the vegetable kingdom, the preservation of men and animals, are proofs of the presence and power of God. Every creature at every moment of time is under his inspection. His eye pierces the thickest veil. Often has he shown his perfect knowledge of men by bringing the hidden things of darkness to light. Achan could not hide the wedge of gold from his eye. The Saviour revealed to men their inmost thoughts. How could God judge the world were he not now witness of all things? How could he at the last produce a record of every action did he not now mark all the doings of the sons of men? But we notice, 3d, The practical uses we are to make of this doctrine. How great and how glorious a being is Jehovah!—present here and present everywhere, his immensity fills the universe. From no place can he be excluded. He looks over the vast of creation. The star that twinkles, the planet that glitters, the orbs that like gems spangle the heavens, he at once sees. He also sees all the innumerable worlds that people space, and every creature found in these worlds. His eye particularises all, from the seraph that burns before the throne to the insect that flutters in the sunbeam. The mind of man is as visible to God as is his body. He is acquainted with all its purposes, thoughts, feelings, and desires. Hell is naked before him. Nowhere can you escape his all-seeing eye. If you embark on the mighty deep and discover an island unknown and unpeopled, God is there. In the grass that grows, in the winds that sigh, in the brooks that murmur, and in the stars that bespangle the sky, God is seen. But we may also learn from the doctrine how affecting is our existence from the fact that God sees us. In all places, in all circumstances, in sorrow and joy, asleep and awake, God never ceases to see man. Heathens were wont to fancy themselves in the presence of some great and good man to check their evil propensities—how much more effectual must it be to realise the presence of God! The doctrine, further, is

fraught with consolation to Christians. The preacher here enumerated many of the circumstances and doings which God sees and approves in his people.

The discourse occupied about 50 minutes.

On entering the church where the subject of our sketch ministers the stranger is at first more inclined to expect a feast of antiquities than of divinity. The building is indeed venerable in its appearance and its locality. The massy pillars speak of many centuries—the marbled walls tell of the mighty dead who have long been deposited. The dead in and around the sacred edifice are very numerous, but the living are few. The preacher makes his appearance, and still nothing very remarkable is anticipated. His appearance tells that he has battled it pretty fiercely with the world; but it speaks not very decidedly of victory. His step is grave along the cold passage, but there is little in it to indicate the marchings of genius or even of a noted man. Soon as he stands up, however, the scene changes. Antiquities are forgotten—there stands forth a marked man. The most casual observer sees that this is not a mere automaton—this is not a stereotyped divine—there are identity, individuality, activity. The reading of the Psalm is marked—the reading of the chapter is more marked, and the prayer is his own. Odd, indeed, are his attitudes and gestures—the frame is twisted into many a shape—the features express many a feeling, but mind is at work—earnestness, energy, and vigour, are apparent, and expectation is on the tiptoe. The text is read, but neither the book nor the audience is seen. The preacher looks to the gallery, where there is no one, or to the roof, or shuts his eyes—he raises his hands to his head, or crosses them on his breast. The hearer is satisfied that thought is about to appear, but where it is lodged is still a mystery. It is not before the preacher, for he has no notes—it seems not to be ready on his tongue—the idea at first is that the preacher is acting as a sponge, he is squeezing it out of his body, and, to effect his purpose, it is twisted into many a strange shape. But the thought does come out, and that is the all-important matter, and thought which would do no discredit to preachers of greatest name. We refer to the above outline in proof. The introduction is neat and nervous—

the outline clear and logical, and the illustrations apt and beautiful. The preacher has a mind which can appreciate the fair things and the lovely of nature, and a heart to enter into the feelings of the lonely wanderer whose progress he was depicting. The discourse is one of rare beauty. Of its kind it is a model sermon. We are satisfied that he who could deliver such a discourse without notes is not far from popularity—that he had been popular before now but for his somewhat *outre* manner—a manner which, after all, is only the manifestation of a strong individuality. He might, however, be more accurate in his pronunciation, and a little more particular in his style.

The preacher was particularly happy in the descriptive parts of his discourse. Hagar's lovely, and yet lonely, position was depicted with the hand of a master. The doctrinal part of the discourse was probably less able, and yet it was scriptural and forcible. In discussing the omniscience of God there was, however, more of statement and affirmation than of illustration or proof. The Divine omniscience was alleged rather than illustrated. The practical lessons were, however, plain and important, and the summing up unexceptional and excellent. The preacher is one who probably has not yet taken the high aim which he ought. Were he thoroughly to prepare his discourses, and to study earnestly the communicative, he may soon obtain to himself a name among the popular preachers of his time. What Mr Gillan is in Glasgow Mr Watson ought to be in Stirling. Their minds are of the same class, though we allege not they are of the same strength.

Mr Watson studied, we believe, at the University of Glasgow. For some years he was minister of a Scotch church in Northumberland. In 1838 he was appointed by the Crown to the Chaplaincy of Stirling Castle, which he still holds. In 1843 he was presented by the Magistrates and Town Council of Stirling to the West Church in that town, where he has laboured since with much acceptance.

MAY 18, 1850.

REV. JOHN MACRAE,

GREENOCK.

THE history of the Gael in his native glens is fast drawing to a close. Northern mountains and islands are now marketable commodity, to be let or sold to the highest bidder, whether Jew or Gentile, chieftain or broker—a Mac or a Monsieur. Whether this be a circumstance to be regretted, or otherwise, we do not here intend to offer an opinion; but, certainly, the idea of whole tribes being compelled to leave the spot where their forefathers lived and died, and which is associated with their own first experience of life, is not at all agreeable to the better feelings of human nature. We have a good illustration of this when the Hebrews wandered captive “By Babel streams,” and wept when they remembered Zion, and notwithstanding all that is now said about men being citizens of the world, and the advantages of emigration, the uninitiated human heart will, to the end of time, cling to the country and the spot of its earliest associations. The Jews—“tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast”—though scattered throughout the world, and though thousands of them never lifted their eyes upon Lebanon, or the hills about Jerusalem, feel their souls, mammon-serving as they are represented to be—still longing after home. And is it to be expected that a people of so ardent a temperament as the Celtic can leave their native mountains, and the graves of their fathers and kindred, with stolid indifference? But leave them they must, and, like the Jews, be scattered over the earth, but without prophecy to give the hope of a final restoration. In Australia, in the backwoods of America, in the cities of our own land—wherever

they are to be found—the ties of kindred bind them together in a community of feeling. Even when driven from their homes they continue to meet together, socially and ecclesiastically. Their patriotism is strong, and their love to one another seems equally strong. Though they refuse not to mix with the people among whom circumstances compel them to sojourn, they prefer, like the Jews, to dwell alone, and to worship in their own manner. They sing their Psalms not always in tune, but with a voice which would loudly echo along the mountain sides. Philosophers maintain that their language will ultimately die out; but the probability is that ages will yet elapse before such be the case. Though most of them understand English as well as most Englishmen do, still no language can touch their sympathies so effectively as that familiar to them in their early days; and there are in this country not a few preachers of highly cultivated minds who are capable of preaching the gospel to them in their native tongue. We have been led into this strain by a visit made on a late occasion to Hope Street Gaelic Chapel, where the subject of the present sketch conducted the afternoon's services in English. After the usual devotional services, he gave out for text, Heb. xii. 1—2, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight," &c. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," &c. He commenced by saying—

That by looking to the preceding chapter we might see something like a text, and a statement of doctrine in the first verse, of which the remaining part of the chapter is an illustration. The text is "Faith." The doctrine is, that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The numerous instances quoted by the apostle throughout the remaining part of the chapter prove and illustrate this doctrine; and the words we have read for the subject of this afternoon's service may be considered as a practical application of the whole subject. By the cloud of witnesses we are to understand a large number—a great multitude of witnesses—whose testimony was fitted to animate and encourage the believing Hebrews in their Christian course, amidst all the trials to which they were exposed from persecutors without

and from corruption within. To run the race set before us is to maintain a course of gospel obedience to the commandments of God. To persevere in this course to the end is the way to obtain the crown. This is what the apostle would press home upon the minds of those whom he addressed in this Epistle from the example of Old Testament believers. And as it is of the utmost importance for us to know whether or not we are running this race aright, I shall, first of all, state three particulars so indispensably necessary, that without them no sinner can so run as to obtain. 1. The soul must be quickened. The first Adam was a living soul, but could not communicate life to his posterity. On the contrary, he lost his own, and in that way brought death upon all men, so that all are by nature dead in trespasses and in sins, and, unless quickened by the Spirit of Christ, none of them can possibly run this race so as to obtain. How often, for instance, do we see a man the most sagacious in conducting the affairs of this world, and so prosperous in these pursuits that his neighbours, in their time of perplexity, will consult him with confidence; but when we try him on the subject of this race we soon find that he cannot sympathise with us. Why? Because though God has gifted him with strong intellectual powers, yet, being dead spiritually, he cannot understand spiritual things. It is God's merciful provision that the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. To Jesus Christ it is given to have life in himself, and to give life to whomsoever he will. He is the resurrection and the life. By his Spirit he quickeneth those who were dead in trespasses and in sins, and in this way he supplies them with an essential qualification to run this race. 2. Those who would run the Christian race must be spiritually enlightened in the knowledge of Christ as a Saviour. 3. It is absolutely necessary that those who would run so as to obtain, have faith in Christ. It is by faith in Christ that the believer draws out of the fulness of grace that is in Christ; and it is by thus living on Christ that the soul is nourished and strengthened for the performance of duty, and thus enabled to run with patience the race set before him. Without being thus sustained by grace through faith in Christ a man can no more run this race than a new-born infant could make

progress towards maturity without the nourishment provided for him in nature. It is then the man that is quickened, enlightened, and taught to believe on Christ, by the Spirit of God, and he only, who is in a condition to run with patience the race set before him. The preacher then proceeded to direct the attention of his hearers to the great cloud of witnesses; and, with a view to meet various cases, cited for examples, Abel, Noah, Moses, and David, shewing that each of these, though dead, yet speaketh, and beareth witness the most encouraging to those who are holding fast their profession of Christianity amidst the snares and seducing influences of a present evil world, and the temptations of the great adversary. Lastly, He referred to Christ as the great Forerunner of his people—how He ran his race by a way never trodden before —how he removed every barrier, and, as it were, smoothed the way for his followers, when he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now at rest after running his race, ready to welcome his followers into the heavenly mansions, to partake with him, in his glory and rest, when they shall have run the race he set before them.

The effect of a sermon cannot be dissociated from the voice, appearance, and manner of the preacher. The reader who has not seen and heard this preacher must fancy a venerable gentleman, of tall and portly aspect, somewhat past the meridian of life, with thin grey hairs floating about a well-developed brow, and a countenance grave, firm in expression, yet giving little indication of energy. He commences in a low tone of voice, and in an accent that tells significantly of the glens and mountains of the north. His sentences are short and uttered slowly, as if the speaker was not at his ease while speaking in the language of the Saxon. Yet there is no embarrassment, and gradually the eye kindles, the hands and arms begin to move, the sentences become more complete, till at last the auditors begin to find themselves in the presence of a sturdy, stalwart, energetic, and shrewd-minded preacher—one who, had he lived in the “days of other years,” might have been classed with the mighty Conloch, with Oscar and Fingal, and his daring exploits immortalised in the pages of Ossian. He is no syren-voiced preacher, whose mild and tender sayings fall upon the

congregation like a shower of down. The fanning zephyr gently bending the grass, tickling the leaves, or gracefully undulating a hair, has no analogy in him. If we seek analogies in external nature we must go to the cataract, the sounding shore, to the whirlwind, and the tempest. Preaching with him is not a sweet, a voluptuous and indolent dream, it is a voice of command, of warning, and of action, and he speaks as one having authority, and occasionally gives a proof of this by raising his clenched fist, and shaking it in such a manner as to make the spectator feel that he is not in the presence of a Sturgite or of a disciple of the arbitration school. Yet still he is by no means a gloomy or wrathful preacher. He is stern because he loves to keep his hearers in the way of happiness here, and to permanent happiness hereafter, and we should think that there is pleasantry in him when time and place are expedient. The sermon, of which we have given an outline, was of no common place description. It had considerable variety of illustration, and much homely, vigorous, and shrewd remark. It was not strictly textual, but had direct practical bearing on the condition of mankind at the present day. Without this sermonizing must ever be deficient, and comparatively profitless, even though it should be characterised with the ideality of Homer, or Dante, or of Milton, and be graced with the eloquence of Demosthenes or Cicero. As a display of anything like scholarship, profound reasoning, or subtle disquisition, it never was intended to be so, nor do we mean to speak of it in such a light. It was intended to serve a much higher purpose—to strengthen religious principle—show the path of duty—and inculcate a becoming consistency with profession, in every-day walk and conversation. It was suited to circumstances, and this must ever be the first requisite in a public address, whether on science, politics, religion, or any other subject. We have no hesitation in pronouncing the preacher to be well qualified for his sphere of labour, both naturally and by acquisition, and had his early lot been cast amid the circles of refinement to be met with in the southern parts of the empire, he would have enjoyed no very limited fame. His voice is somewhat gruff and powerful, and in the more declamatory parts of this discourse he got into an ardent

outburst—threw his arms from side to side, crossed them on his breast with a force sufficient to drive the breath from a person of but ordinary physical endowments, and made the whole house vibrate with the sound of his voice. To persons accustomed to the polished matter and manner of many of our local preachers the services on this occasion had altogether a romantic aspect, carrying them away altogether from streets and temples to the glens and mountains where the works of nature are not yet concealed by the works of man.

Mr Macrae is a native of Ross-shire. After he had reached manhood he commenced a student's life, and attended the usual classical and theological curriculum in the Universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Though by no means so well prepared for the classes as many young men he carried prizes in the Greek and Mathematical classes. He was licensed in 1838, and shortly after ordained over the Government Church of Cross, in the Island of Lewis. After presiding over that church six years he was settled at Knockbain, near Inverness, where he continued till he was removed to his present charge in Greenock, in October, 1849. Several of the Kirk-sessions in the neighbourhood of Inverness petitioned the Presbytery against his removal, but he saw it his duty to go to Greenock, and his ministry there has commenced auspiciously. He presides over a very numerous congregation, and preaches both in the Gaelic and English languages.

JANUARY 4, 1851.

R E V. J O H N K E R,

ALNWICK, NORTHUMBERLAND.

THE opinions of the English press of Scottish theology are painfully amusing. The sons of Caledonia having fully established their claims to equality on every other subject, the English wish it to be understood that our ecclesiastics are greatly behind. Hence we find not only that portion of the press which belongs to the mongrel ecclesiastical hierarchy sneering at our religion and our Sabbaths, but also unendowed and poor nonconformity would fain have it to be understood that our religion is a very inferior article, and our piety more the result of local association than of intelligent conviction. The Scotch can well afford to smile at this English delusion. Sneer at Scotch religion!—it ill becomes England, when the high places of its pulpit and press are occupied with Scotchmen. What were England at this moment but for the despised theology? We shall not stop to report the triumphs in science, in art, and in philosophy, which Scotland claims, but remind the English of the present occupants of its metropolitan pulpits, and these tell it to cease its sneers at Scottish theology. What country, moreover, has sent forth to the ends of the world the most successful host of enterprising missionaries? Scotland is the country, and their success in England and in the ends of the earth is not because their religion savours of the soil, but because it savours of the Bible. The Scotch manfully resisted the encroachments of those who, with impious hands, attempted to mix their Bible rituals with the uninspired, and, in not a few cases, absurd additions of human defenders of the faith. Their theology is healthful, because the Bible is the only

authorised text book, and its ministers unknown to worldly fame, and distinguished only as the servants of the Saviour of the world. Our thoughts were directed into the channel indicated by the above, on hearing, on Sabbath last, one of the many of our Scotch preachers sent across the Tweed to enrich English theology, and to direct English thought. The Rev. John Ker, who has little more than entered the English territory, is one of those names to which the Scotch can point when ungrateful England would despise those to whom it owes many of its temporal comforts as well as spiritual advantages. The congregation in Alnwick, over which the subject of our sketch ministers, will be the last to attempt to despise Scotch theology. Last Sabbath the subject of our sketch preached in our city, and occupied the pulpit of the Rev. Professor Eadie. His subject, in the forenoon, was the 133d Psalm (commencing, "Behold how good," &c.) He commenced by saying that

The Psalm was one of the fifteen entitled Songs of Degrees. Some think they were so called because they were sung by the captive Jews on their return from Babylon. Others think they were sung by the tribes as they marched yearly to the temple—as they passed through the Valley of Baca till they appeared before God perfect in Zion. There can be no doubt but they are admirably adapted for these occasions. They are excellent travelling songs, and well fitted to cheer the weary traveller. Others, however, think that the song before us was written on the occasion of David's coronation, when the tribes that had been alienated united under his government—while others think it was designated for an annual festival. We are inclined to think the Psalm served both purposes. It was probably sung when the tribes that had lived in open hostility cast aside the swords they had drawn against each other, and received each other with one long and mutual embrace. David stands and contemplates the various tribes as a father looks on his family, and, as he looks, he says, "Behold how good," &c. In directing attention to this Psalm we shall, first, illustrate its terms; and, secondly, exhibit its spirit. The 1st thing, then, the phraseology of the Psalm. Its subject, as stated in the first verse, is brotherly union. It does not refer to those who *think* alike so much as to those who *feel* alike. Even during

the millennium men may not think alike on every subject; but they will evidently be of one heart—like a tree which sends forth numerous branches which have each a distinct and different form, but all are nourished by the same root, and all are united in the one common trunk. There are some called brethren who agree best when they are apart. As soon as they come together and reveal their distinctive views they cease to feel as brethren; but the union that requires concealment is valueless. That is true union which resembles the varied and concentrated rays of the sun's colours, which emit one pure beam of light. The Psalmist says of fraternal union that it is good and it is pleasant. There are some things good that are not pleasant, and some things pleasant that are not good, but brotherly union is both good and pleasant. The Psalmist employs two figures to illustrate these two attributes of brotherly union. He inverts the order, however, in which he states the good and the pleasant, and first illustrates the pleasant and then the good. The holy oil on the head of Aaron is selected as the emblem of the pleasantness of brotherly union. Many of the Old Testament rites are emblematical and full of meaning. The anointing of Aaron and his sons for the office of the priesthood is one of the richest of these symbolical rites. Moses was instructed how to make the holy anointing oil, and the different proportions of the sweet spices that composed it were of divine arrangement. (See Exod. xxx 22—25, which the preacher quoted.) This anointing was a rich declaration of gospel truth. What else does it teach than the anointing of Christ without measure with the gifts of the Spirit, and which spreads from him to the remotest of his members till the house is filled with the odour of the ointment? So rich, so rare, and so delicious is that spirit of heavenly charity which, descending first on the head of Jesus, spreads all around till it is borne outward of every breeze, and wafted on all the winds of heaven, till the world feels the breath of heaven itself is there. The second figure is the dew of Hermon and the mountains of Zion. Hermon was one of the highest of the peaks of the hills north of Palestine. The dews of Hermon were distinguished by their copiousness and fertilising power, and are so still. But not only must the dews

that fall on Hermon's giant head and glisten on its extremities be mentioned, the subject sung is a sacred one, and the dews of Zion must be mentioned—the dews that illustrate both Zion's peace and Zion's prosperity. There are certain spots on earth consecrated to our memory and our hearts. On these spots the sun, in our imagination, shines brighter, and the dews fall more lovely—and Zion is the place of the Psalmist's sweetest recollections. The stones of it are dear to him, and he favours the very dust thereof. Zion's dew emblems forth Zion's peace and felicity. In this country, distinguished by its rivers and its rains, it is difficult fully to appreciate the force of the Psalmist's figure of dew. In Palestine the vertical sun, the live long day, pours his rays on the dry and parched land till not a drop of moisture remains concealed. The very earth opens in rents and chinks. But cool night comes and embraces the thirsty ground, and the grateful dew glistens on every blade of grass, and the earth's decayed face is renewed, for heaven has heard the cry of the thirsty earth and refreshed it when it was weary, and it reflects on its bosom the image of the azure heavens. And so is it when the dews of the Spirit fall on the church—the earth then reflects the image of heaven. *There* the Lord commandeth the blessing—*there*, either on Mount Zion, the immediate antecedent, or on such scenes as have just been described. *There*, when brethren dwell in unity, does the Lord command the blessing. Having thus briefly discussed the *terms* of this Psalm, we now equally briefly consider, 2dly, The spirit it exhibits. We still keep by the order of the passage, and discuss, 1st, The pleasantness of such union; and, 2d, Its profitableness. Brotherly love is most pleasant both to the spectators and participators. God himself is among the spectators. Though nothing can add to his blessedness or diminish from it, brotherly union is peculiarly pleasing to God. The one object of the work of redemption was to destroy the enmity between God and man, and between man and man. The Father is the God of love. The Son loved the church and gave himself for it. The Spirit of love breathes into the minds of men. Heaven, indeed, is love, &c. The result of all this manifestation is that men may love God and one another in return. Let that mind be in you which was in

Christ Jesus. Here the preacher quoted from the poet about the man that sees furthest into the heart of God making one thing of all theology. Angels view with delight and profit the manifestation of fraternal love. There is joy in heaven when one sinner leaves the ranks of enmity and joins those of love. The prospects of such results made them sing in Bethlehem's plains, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace," &c. This union is pleasant to the partakers as well as to the spectators of it. The more union the more pleasure. Love still grows the more when with millions shared. Some think their little party have a monopoly of the love of heaven. Some of them are good young men, but in their haste they separate themselves from others. In heaven they will blush, if there is room for shame there, when they meet those they denounced on earth. Better is it to remove all barriers and let our love flow out to all the Israel of God. Better to make earth the beginning of heaven, where there is neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, as leaders of parties, but Christ is all in all. Like David let our love be to the saints on the earth and to the excellent, and let us join in the song sung in heaven, "Behold how good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell in unity!" But, 2d, Brotherly love is profitable as well as pleasant. The dew of heaven is twice blessed. It refreshes, first, the decayed plant which already has life; and, secondly, it adds increase to the vegetation—fresh blades of grass and fresh flowers—and so is it with Christian love. It refreshes first the existing life in the soul of the Christian. The preacher here at some length showed the evil effects of dissension and strife among the ranks of Christians. Can the delicate flowers stand the angry tempest or the desert wind? He then gave a historical view of the Arian controversy, and of the controversies between Luther and Zwinglius, and Luther and Calvin, that retarded the Reformation, and of the dissensions that rent the early Secession Church, and expressed a hope that the unions that have taken place in that section of the Church will increase its inward grace as well as its outward extension. Let, said he, the standards of the different sections be taken down, or, if they must needs stand, let them be low in the presence of the banner of the cross, and let the Church, united in one

firm phalanx, say and sing, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered, and let those that hate him flee before him." At the beginning of the gospel—at its first promulgation—Christ himself placed a banner in the hands of his people. It was, "By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." For this the Redeemer prayed, and while it was verified in the church's history the church was triumphant. But the weapon not only fell from the hand that wielded it, the enemy caught it up, and it was made by them the church's reproach. The infidel and blasphemer alleged that the Christianity which was so divided must be from earth and not from heaven. Till now the union of Christians has been so obscure as to be seen only by Christians themselves. The landscape by art can now, by the rays of the sun, be transferred to the silver plate, but at first it is so dim that only the artist's eye can discover it. It requires to be anointed ere the eye of others can see it, and so is it with brotherly love. The picture of it hitherto has been seen only by the practised eye of faith, but we must pour on it the holy anointing oil, and with willing hands burnish it up till men gather around and say, with delight and astonishment, Behold how these love one another! In conclusion, the preacher recommended each to seek to extend the spirit of heavenly love—to encourage the true fraternity who recognise the Father in heaven—the true equality, where each esteems others better than himself—the true liberty, wherewith Christ makes his people free.

The discourse occupied about fifty minutes.

We have given the above at considerable length, because we found it impossible to abridge it more without destroying its identity and leading characteristics. The discourse is a poem, and in attempting it we found ourselves at a task something similar as to abridge Thomson's Seasons or Pollok's Course of Time. We call it a poem, for it was throughout filled up with sparkling imagery and sustained with considerable power. The Psalm selected is one of the most picturesque and sublime of the sacred odes, and to discuss it in dull prose is to hold up a candle to the sun, and to illustrate it in diction worthy of it requires the inspiration of the poet. We

know not whether the subject of our sketch ever made verses, but we are certain he has composed poetry of the highest order. His discourse only wanted finish to be itself a sublime and sparkling poem. When we say it lacked finish we refer, not to the outline, for that was completed, nor to the selection of figure, for that was unexceptionable, but we refer to the diction, which occasionally fell below the subject. Nor was it at all wonderful that it should do so when we consider the preacher used no notes. The mind that could produce such a discourse is active—the mind that could finish it fully without notes would be more than human. It is by no means marvellous that a discourse such as the above is not the most popular discourse that could be preached. There is not a man but must to some extent appreciate beautiful imagery and poetical diction, but this discourse was argumentative as well as poetical. Like all true poetry it was founded on a substantial substratum, and to fully appreciate it the train of thought had to be followed as well as the beauty of the figures understood. Hence here and there a listless auditor could be seen among the crowded congregation, for some are so dull as to be unable to comprehend such a discourse, and some are so indolent as to refuse the effort required to understand it. It must also be confessed that the preacher sometimes uses long and intricate sentences, and classes matters under one period that would be better divided. The ponderous matter in which he deals would require a Samson in physical strength to do it justice in the delivery, and hence, though he has evidently prepared his discourse with intense care, he occasionally labours and almost flounders in giving some brilliant thought expression. We would always recommend that a discourse so full of imagery should be read from notes. The strongest memory quails under such a load gathered from all the resources of heaven and earth. As an exposition, the discourse is a model one. The figure received proper attention, while the facts it taught were vividly brought out. The only difficulty was to avoid, under the second division, repetition of what had been said under the first. None but thorough masters should attempt such a division. To separate the meaning of the terms of the Psalm from its spirit was a difficult, indeed an impossible, task, and

hence even our preacher had a little repetition. The exposition of the various figures was truly excellent. Many that never before could see the propriety of a New Testament Church singing about the anointing of Aaron, saw it on this occasion as the preacher, with the touch of a master, made that anointing emblem the anointing of the Spirit on the head of the great High Priest of our profession, and which Spirit extends to every member of his mystical body, and hastens to fill and bless the world.

Like many other eminent men the appearance of the subject of our sketch does not strike many as prepossessing. His head does not seem particularly large, and the bushy hair conceals its phrenological developments. His face is greatly larger than his brow is high. His features are, however, very marked, and eyes of keen penetration peer from below their great archways. When he begins to speak his features kindle up and his eyes flash with the inspiration of his subject. His gestures are more animated than graceful, and his voice is more strong than musical. Still even in point of delivery he is inferior to the majority of preachers, while in mental activity he is the head and shoulders higher than most of them. We have not had the pleasure of seeing Mr Ker unless in the pulpit, and our opinion is alike unbiassed by personal friendship or by local association. We have noted down such thoughts as his pulpit appearance suggested, and we shall regret should he remain all his days in Northumberland. The scenery of that place may fire his genius—genius, we say—but the Scotch people only can admire his discourses. We see no propriety of gifting the people across the Tweed with such a preacher when we so much need him nearer home.

Mr Ker evidently possesses a good mind, which has been assiduously cultivated. It is more elegant than profound or subtle. He has a vivid fancy, which delights to revel in gorgeous imagery. Few possess an equal readiness of thought and expression, and his finest figures glitter like pearls as he scatters them around. Altogether he must stand high in the body to which he belongs, though more for elegance than strength, and beauty than power. He is a very good German scholar, in the highest sense of that term. He is much liked for his

amiable disposition. Industry and close application have marked his career, and he is very properly considered by judges a rising man. He is very happy in his addresses to the young, and is well liked wherever he officiates.

Mr Ker was born in Tweeds-muir, Peebleshire, but was brought up chiefly in Edinburgh, where he attended the High School and University, and carried off many prizes. He attended the ministry of Dr Harper, and latterly that of the Rev. Dr John Brown. After passing the classical and theological departments with great success, he was licensed as a preacher by the Edinburgh Presbytery in 1844. In 1845 he was settled over the congregation in Alnwick, the county town of Northumberland, and has ministered there with success. The congregation has flourished under his ministrations, and he has paid much attention to the young of his congregation. He is highly respected by all classes for his general intelligence, his affable disposition, and his ever active benevolence.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1849.

[Since the above was written he has been removed to Glasgow as assistant and successor to the venerable Dr Kidston.]

REV. ANDREW GRAY,

PERTH.

AMONG all the towns in Scotland, the Fair City of Perth stands pre-eminent for the church-going habits of the inhabitants, and other proprieties becoming the solemn associations of the day of sacred rest. View the streets early on Sabbath morning, and, as far as the natives are concerned, you are seldom annoyed with the dissipated worshippers of Bacchus, reeling to and fro along the streets, leaving the haunts of wretchedness and immorality. Even after canonical hours the doors of the dram shops are not to be seen half open, inviting the thirsty to partake of the intoxicating draught. When the church bells begin to peal every street and lane is immediately crowded with young and old, rich and poor, who, with solemn gait and grave countenance, proceed to their respective places of worship. When the bells cease the majority of the churches are well filled. When a Sabbath evening sermon is announced the church is crowded, not by the particular denomination to which it belongs, but by all classes of Protestants, throwing their sectarian differences aside, and with their countenances indicating that they are, in reality, going to fall down and worship at the footstool of Jehovah. This propriety of conduct may be attributed, in a great measure, to the energy and perseverance of the clergy. They are men of gifts as well as graces. Very few towns in Scotland, of equal size, can boast of so many eminent ministers. Suffice it to say, that each denomination is more than pleased with its own. The

Established Church adherents are proud of the logical accuracy, the chaste diction, and elegant style of an Anderson ; the United Presbyterian are no less proud of the naturally-gifted and strong-minded Young. He whose name heads this sketch is the recognised leader of the Free Church in that quarter. Let us examine his claims to the distinction.

On Sabbath week he ascended the platform in the City Hall (his church being at present under repair) at twenty minutes past two o'clock afternoon, and gave out for praise Psalm cxlvi., from 5th to 9th verses inclusive, after which he offered up a very practical prayer, enriched with Scripture language. This part of the service occupied twelve minutes. He read, without remark, the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. After praise he gave out, as his text, Philippians ii. 15, and first clause of 16th verse, "The sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." He commenced by saying that

This passage refers to God's people. It sets forth four things concerning them, 1st, Their rank—they are "the sons of God;" 2d, Their character—it is, or should be, "without rebuke;" 3d, Their circumstances—they are "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation;" 4th, Their function—"among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." 1. We have to consider their rank. True Christians are the sons of God. This rank is acquired (1.) By adoption. It was common enough in old times, and it is a thing that happens sometimes still, for a member of one family to be joined to another family—placed upon a footing with all the other members of the family, and admitted to a share of their privileges. By adoption Christians are translated out of the family of old Adam into the family of the Second Man. They cease to be the children of disobedience and become the children of God; they get the Spirit of adoption, signing and sealing the change that God in his grace doth bestow, and crying within them *Abba, Father.* (2.) By birth. This is the ordinary way into which we enter into any family. The households of the human race are constituted in this way—and thus the family of God is built up. This man and that man

there is born into the family of God, and so God maketh unto himself a house. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "Of his own will begat he us," saith the Apostle. (3.) By creation. It is by creation that the angels are the sons of God. Our first parents were the children of God, because his creating hand made them. Now there is a new creation in the case of every convert; there is a new heart and a new creature, which constitute a title to the rank of sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. Any of the three ways which I have specified would have originated the sonship of believers; but it is acquired in all the three ways, and there is thus a threefold cord connecting the Christian with the family of God. Let me next mention the advantage connected with the rank. Generally rank carries peculiar privileges along with it. It is so here. There is (1) Qualification for heaven. This rank may be said (2) To give precedence. Sons of God, however humble their outward estate, take precedence in the estimation of God before the great ones of the earth. (3) This rank gives also a title to an inheritance. He illustrated these three ideas at considerable length. 2d. Their character, as "without rebuke," falls to be considered. The idea conveyed is that the character should befit the rank. As the rank is high their character should correspond. All men feel that it is exceedingly disgraceful when a person of high rank is of ill repute. They should be without rebuke (1) as sons of God by adoption. (2) As the sons of God by birth. (3) As the sons of God by creation. 3d. Their circumstances—"In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation." Here we are surrounded by many who are not of the same family—multitudes who do not recognise our rank, who see no distinction in being the sons of God. They are a perverse nation. They have no reverence for the rank of spiritual nobility which God has conferred upon his people. It is a dark land through which we tread—a world of darkness where beasts of prey are roaming. Great danger flows to the Christian from the pernicious example of wicked men. Oftentimes the church of God has been corrupted and well nigh ruined.

through the influence of the prevailing example around it. 4th. Their function—"among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." The function has reference to the circumstances. Hence it is all the more necessary that you should have a clear conception of the circumstances in which you are placed. The nature of your duties here are determined by the circumstances with which you are surrounded. The duty of Christians in heaven will be totally different from that of the duty incumbent on the church militant. "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" as luminaries, as suns, as stars, as beacons, showing men the way to walk in—showing men how to guide their barque across the sea of time—indicating the rocks on which they might be wrecked and lost, and the channel by which they may reach the harbour of salvation. It is from God they have received the charge. He who gave Christ for a light to lighten the Gentiles, says to the church, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee." This function implies two things. It implies that there is darkness in the world, and that there is death in it. Finally, Consider how this function is discharged. It is the duty of the church of God to do it collectively, and it is the duty of believers individually to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. Christ calls upon all his disciples to feed his lambs and his sheep, to be his witnesses, to confess him before men, and to hold forth the word of life to their perishing kinsmen. It is the duty of individual Christians to do this by their example, by their contributions, and by their personal efforts and activities. There are many ways that will constantly offer themselves to those that are willing for the work. Many opportunities will arise to those who are desirous that opportunities should occur for serving the Lord in the gospel of his Son, by shining as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.

This discourse, like all the discourses of this preacher, is remarkably distinct and simple in the outline. Instead of trying how much he can make out of a short insulated text he generally takes up some plain passage, and proceeds to illustrate it by adopting the divisions in which it naturally presents

itself. In this case there is a seeming incongruity in the subdivisions of his first general head. It is difficult to conceive of the same person being adopted into a family by all the three modes specified. The natural reference is somewhat violated, in order to bring out fully the new relationship into which believers are brought. No doubt believers are adopted, born again, and created; but there is no necessity to bring in all these three forms to illustrate the text in question. This plan was pursued to a great extent by the older divines. They were not satisfied with illustrating a text—they must exhaust it. A whole system of divinity was by them frequently attached to some text, the elucidation of which required only a very few particulars. In reference to the discourse in question, a philosophical mind gets quite bewildered when the same person is spoken of as being born into a family, adopted into a family, and created into a family. In fact these three modes of expressing the same idea severally belong to a different class of illustration. They are all true and all important, but any one of them would have answered the purpose of the preacher on this occasion. The repetition and application of them are particularly awkward, and greatly mar the unity of the discourse. The remaining parts of the subject are handled with great skill and ability. His sermon delivered at the opening of the first Free Synod of Perth, April, 1844, on the text, Luke xii. 51, is an admirable specimen of a vigorous scriptural discourse. The preacher makes no attempt at oratorical display, but, in a powerful manner, brings out the meaning of that difficult passage, and deduces from it warrant for the disruption. We do not think all his statements wise nor even true. His mind is precipitous as well as strong, and many of his assertions, honestly made, are liable to question. Even his Catechism, which is the most popular of all his efforts, is far from unassailable, and should be remodelled, now that the *heat of the disruption* has passed away.

Mr Gray, as a fearless controversialist, has very few equals in Scotland. Of these powers he gave sufficient evidence during the ten years conflict between the Church of Scotland and the Courts of Law. Very few of the talented men, called “the dominant party,” in the church at that period, were so

well adapted to enter the field of discussion. A strong physical frame, and thorough acquaintance with the Presbyterian forms of church government and ecclesiastical law, united with indomitable courage and perseverance, stamped him at once one of the leaders of his party. Scarcely a town or hamlet in the north of Scotland but which he visited, and, in the spirit of a true blue Presbyterian of the 17th century, denounced Erastianism as the "usurper of the crown rights of the Redeemer." When he appears on the platform his countenance indicates firmness and determination; but when he commences to speak his manner is disagreeable to the auditor. He hesitates in every third or fourth word; but we attribute this more to choice than necessity. As he kindles on his subject the majesty of a strong, original, and highly philosophical, mind shines forth. Imagine a man, apparently 45 years of age, of middle size and corpulent habit, standing before you with a large and emphatic countenance, extravagant gestures, and clenched fists, his fire-baptised and volcanic sentences rolling forth in thick succession, falling on his adversary like the lava on the mountain sides, and you have some idea of his platform efforts. His most brilliant displays are on the spur of the moment. Without any previous preparation he can reply to a host of preceding speakers, homologate or confound their ideas, and give the question a new aspect as it suits his own mind. He has a grasp of mind not much inferior to the late talented Dr Andrew Thomson, although he lacks his eloquence. He can meet an opponent at any time with his own weapons. If he tries to cast dust at him the assailant is sure to get mud in return. He can wield the weapons of satire with great effect. Immediately before the Disruption a kind member of Presbytery, who was considered invincible, had a number of questions maturely prepared, in order to take Mr Gray by surprise before the Presbytery; but he instantly answered them in succession, so logically, accompanied by a volley of irony, that his most inveterate enemies could not refrain from cheering him, and his inquisitor felt his overthrow to be complete and tremendous, and he has spoken very little in church courts since. In the courts of the Free Church, when he speaks, he is listened to with attention, and

his opinion is oftener asked than spontaneously given. He is not like those perpetual chatterers whose tongues are like an ever-going bell in every place but the pulpit, where they have the sweet sound of a broken pot. However eminent Mr Gray is as a divine, or a pastor, we concur with the general opinion, that his talents are better adapted for the bar or the professor's chair. A competent judge stated, as his opinion, if Mr G. had taken the wig instead of the bands, when young, he would have risen to the top of the legal profession. It is well known that the leaders of the Free Church offered him the theological chair, vacant by the death of Dr Chalmers, now occupied by Professor Bannerman. His lectures and speeches, although not highly eloquent, are characterised by strong statement, sublime imagery, and complete order. He is conversant with facts and principles; has studied mankind and nature; and has completely arranged and digested their beauties and blemishes. A mass of facts and figures will not constitute a compact mind, any more than a mass of stones, wood, and lime, will constitute a building—but Mr Gray's mind is built up a magnificent structure—strong and compactly.

Mr Gray is a native of Aberdeen, and received his education in Marischal University of that city. When going through the classes he distinguished himself as a formidable debater. During the Apocryphal controversy, when only a student, he was secretary to the Aberdeen Bible Auxiliary Society, and rendered Dr Andrew Thomson great services. At Dr Thomson's request he wrote a Report of the Controversy, which was considered so elaborate and powerful, that it was sent to the British Museum, where it will remain for ages. The doctor often spoke of him as one who was destined to occupy a prominent place in the Church, after he (Dr T.) was in his grave. In the year 1831 he was ordained minister of Woodside Chapel-of-Ease, Aberdeen. No sooner ordained than he thought he had a right to rule as well as teach, in the Church, and put himself at the head of the agitation to get the Chapel Act passed in the Assembly. He presented a petition to Dr Cook of St Andrews, for a deputation to be heard at the bar of the Assembly, which was granted. Mr Gray was appointed one of the deputation, and opened up the case in a

powerful appeal, which astonished some of the greatest men in the Church. He was immediately afterwards called to the West Parish of Perth, where he remained till the Disruption, when he came out with nearly the whole of his numerous congregation. In the year 1844 he visited the snow-clad mountains of Switzerland, and assisted the disestablished ministers of the Canton de Vaud to organise their infant church. He is author of what is known as the Free Church Catechism, and a number of published discourses. His congregation is large and influential, raising from £600 to £700 a-year for the Schemes of the Church. May he be long spared to preside over them as he has hitherto done.

MARCH 28, 1850.

R E V. J O H N O R R,

GLASGOW.

ON the erection of a new lighthouse, or the alteration of an old one, all possible publicity is given to the event, in order that the tempest-tossed mariner may have his attention turned to the guiding light—a light designed to point out the true course and to save from peril and destruction. It is not without cause that inspiration compares the preacher of the gospel to a light house. The statement of the apostle—"Holding forth the word of life"—refers to an old lighthouse, from which a classical figure held a torch. Were the world as much alive to things eternal as to things temporal, the erection or re-opening of a Christian place of worship would be heralded from shore to shore. When such an event takes place the voyagers on the ocean of life have a "lamp ordained"—a light erected to point them past the dangers of the stormy sea of life to the land of blissful peace beyond. As yet the ecclesiastics of Christianity have vastly too much of public attention, and its great principles and precepts too little. The public are apprised of the war of sect—of the clash of sentiment; but the light that guides to heaven is to some degree hid under a bushel. In our city the re-opening of different places of worship which had been shut by ecclesiastical warfare is comparatively unknown. All heard of them being closed, but scarcely a paragraph is bestowed on their being again occupied as places of Christian worship. One class of ecclesiastics looks on them with doubt—another with jealous "leer malign;"

whereas Paul would have expressed his joy that Christ was preached—that an oasis had been created in the desert—that travellers to eternity were being pointed to the rest and the refuge—the “city of habitation.” How different the feelings of the devout Christian when he enters into such a place from those occasioned by the clash of angry ecclesiastics ! One is inclined to doubt whether a church is aught but an arena of warfare, and an ecclesiastic other than “a man of war from his youth” till he enters a sanctuary on a Sabbath day, and there he hears nothing of churchman or dissenter—nothing of Calvinism or Arminianism—nothing of sect or tribe—but man, as a sinner—and Christ, as a Saviour—man, as an heir of immortality—and Christ, as the resurrection and the life, leading on his followers to the quiet haven of everlasting rest, are the themes. Who can estimate the good which may be achieved in the meanest sanctuary ? Everything there reminds man of his higher nature—of his relationship and duties to God and to man—of that Redeemer whose salvation he needs, and that higher state of being to which he tends. Ecclesiastical courts and controversies make infidels—the services of the sanctuary make men believers. Those who know nothing of ecclesiastics but from what they read of church courts cannot but say, Behold how these teachers of Christianity hate each other ! Those who know Christianity only as it is seen in its services of the sanctuary cannot but exclaim, “Behold how these Christians love one another !” Every good man sighs for the extinction of creed and sects and for the establishment of Sion in all her unsectarian majesty and in all her spiritual tendencies. We can say that we unfeignedly rejoice at the erection or re-opening of any place of worship where the gospel is preached —whether under the turrets and bells of an Establishment or in all the simplicity of a purely spiritual ceremonial. These thoughts were suggested last Sabbath forenoon by a visit to St Stephen’s of this city. That place, after having been shut, by what some consider an unjust legal decision against the sect then in possession of it, has been again opened, and a clergyman of the National Established Church placed over it. We loved it under other auspices—we love it still as a place where the word of life is held forth—as a beacon to point out

to the traveller bound for eternity the surrounding dangers, and guide in a safe pathway to the better country beyond. The clergyman discoursed in the forenoon on John xv. 1—7, “I am the vine,” &c. He commenced by saying that

The doctrines, &c., of the gospel were exhibited by the apostles, and more especially by our Lord, in striking and beautiful imagery. This gave them to the easterns, who were familiar with imagery, a particular attractiveness. Our Lord and his apostles accommodated themselves to the position and feelings of those they addressed, but their teachings are not the less applicable to men in all times and circumstances. In fact we have advantages to aid in understanding them much superior to those individuals to whom the parables, &c., were addressed. The completion of the gospel throws light on what was at first obscure, and probably, to many, incomprehensible. When our Lord would teach the intimacy of the union between him and his people, he adopts, in the passage before us, the figure of a vine. “I am the vine and ye are the branches.” He thus spoke after he had observed the Lord’s Supper with his disciples, and the wine still before them naturally suggested the figure. The vine is a wide-spreading shrub, which belongs to a genial climate. As its branches derive sustenance from the stem so do believers from Christ. The figure suggests the communicative power of Christ—the nourishment derived from that faith which unites with him. He is the true vine—all other sources of spiritual comfort are false. He only is appointed to supply the necessities of men. Even under the Old Testament dispensation Christ was the dispenser of all saving benefit. Its types and figures all represent him as the source and centre of all spiritual blessings. The figure of a vine is used in different senses. God planted Israel a noble vine, but they became degenerate plants. Satan himself may be compared to a vine sending forth a deadly influence. Jesus Christ, however, is the true vine—cared for by the husbandman—trodden in the wine press, that he might send forth more freely his juices. God the Father is represented as the husbandman. He has the charge of the vineyard, and he has cultivated and preserved it assiduously. Christ, as the vine, is spoken of in his official character. The Father should not

be viewed as an austere judge, but as a gracious and forgiving God. He devised the plan of salvation. He sent his Son to pay the penalty man had incurred. Mercy is not limited to the Son and Holy Ghost—salvation is ascribed to the Father. He found out the ransom. He sent his Son after he had sent his servants. He is as much interested in human redemption as the Son and Holy Ghost. All the three are one in essence and energy—one in carrying out and in completing, the scheme of human redemption. The Father acts through the Son and Holy Ghost. While it is said that the Father purges the bearing branches, it is not less the work of the Holy Spirit to sanctify and cleanse the church by the word. The Father draws men to himself, and the Father sends the Holy Ghost to renew and sanctify the soul. It is to be ever borne in mind that professors of the gospel belong to two classes—those really and those only nominally united to Christ. There are many degenerate plants—many who have the form, but deny the power of godliness. Those united to Christ bring forth fruit unto God. The fountain determines the quality of the stream. The fruits of the Spirit are peace and joy and love. Those fruits may not be seen by the causal observer, but they are not the less real, and proof of their existence will occasionally be given. Christians, indeed, are “living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men.” Union with Christ is commensurate with human existence, whereas those not united to Christ are taken away to be destroyed. Man, once formed in the image of God, fit only for destruction!—banished into outer darkness! How great the loss such sustain! The bearing branches are purged, that they may bring forth more fruit. They will be perfect only in heaven. Christ goes on to say to the disciples, in the narrative, “Now ye are clean through the word I have spoken to you.” The preacher here adverted to the apostacy of Judas, who having left the company of the disciples, it could be said they were clean through the word which Christ had spoken unto them. He adverted to the agency of the purification of believers, “the word;” and spoke of faith and love as the principles on which this union is founded. Our space excludes the discussion on the remaining verses.

In the afternoon Mr Orr preached from these words, "Fools make a mock at sin." The sermon exhibited many points of excellence. The discourses occupied each about three-quarters of an hour.

The preceding outline will satisfy all capable of determining the matter that the views of the preacher on the vital points of the gospel are sound and clear. Than the doctrine of union with Christ there is not one more important, and the preacher showed that it is not nominal or professional union that is taught in the Bible, but a virtual union. He showed that whatever men are, without this union they are barren branches about to be cast out and withered. There was no attempt to rasp down this high doctrine to suit the views of nominal professors. It was stated and enforced in all the length and breadth of its scriptural proportions. The several parts which the different persons in the Trinity sustain in human redemption were clearly taught, and though the freedom of grace was urged, man's duty as a sinner was not overlooked. The theology of the discourse was not only correct but vastly important. It touched on the leading doctrines of the gospel, and presented them faithfully, fully, and clearly. The literature of the discourse must not be overlooked. The passage expounded was one of those highly figurative statements of doctrine which are most difficult to treat properly. It requires much skill and care to make neither too much nor too little of the figure, and to give proper prominence to the thing signified. The drapery must not be dismissed, but the great images which it partly conceals must be brought fully out. The drapery of Scripture is designed not to hide, but to bring out more brilliantly and beautifully the doctrines and duties around which it hangs. We say not that the treatment of this very difficult matter was perfect. We say not that it was original, or even particularly vigorous; but we do say that there was nothing in the description but what was in good taste, and that many mental excellences of promising character were revealed. The preacher aims at correct thinking more than at the marked or emphatic. He restrains rather than gives wings to his fancy. He strives more to exhibit the meaning than to unfold the drapery—to dwell on the useful more than

on the ornamental. Yet there was comparatively little mixing of figure, and no forcing it beyond its proper limits. The discourse indicated a mind well trained and well informed—a taste which promises to reach great perfection—an accuracy which but few young preachers exhibit—a sincerity, modesty, and earnestness, that commend the truth to every one's conscience. The manner of the preacher is pleasing. It is comparatively free of mannerism, and is marked with a severe propriety. His gestures are not much animated, but in good taste—his voice is soft, sweet, and full, and capable of great variety. Though he seldom gave it full scope, it was evident that it possesses considerable compass and power, and may be wielded effectively in argument or appeal. There were a sobriety and propriety about the entire service which gave great hope for the future. It were unjust to remark with anything like severity on even the faults of so young a preacher; but in his case there is much to praise—more to expect, and very little to censure. There is certainly nothing of that flippancy, and pertness, and dandyism, which have of late been occasionally seen in the pulpit. If the preacher meet with due encouragement, we have no apprehensions for his success. Cold neglect, impudent meddling, coarse remark, would crush such a preacher; but give him only justice—treat him openly, candidly, kindly, generously, and he may yet cause his voice to be heard in high places of the Church. We can say truly that we are glad this place of worship has one of such promise appointed to conduct its services. Whatever opinions may be held in connexion with ecclesiastics in general, and of the position of this erection in particular, every Christian will be delighted to learn that Christ is preached within its long-deserted walls. A shut place of worship in such a population is a bad omen. What are the hundred churches of Glasgow to a population of nearly four hundred thousand? Is a place of worship enough for four thousand souls? Are any so sectarian as to prefer to let thousands perish in their guilt without an effort made to save them, provided that effort is not in every way made according to their ecclesiastical creed? We trust St Stephen's is to become a centre of moral and spiritual influence, and that under this amiable and excellent preacher its

abandoned pews will be weekly crowded by devout worshippers. We congratulate those interested in this church on the appointment of this preacher. They have in this matter at least taken a step in the right direction. We have no apprehension of anything we may say diverting him from his study; but in a fashionable population he will find many allurements which he must steel himself against if he would reach eminence. One ill-prepared discourse in such a place may do the preacher and congregation a world of injury. Much better shut the door than appear there with crude thoughts and an ill-arranged discourse. There is no royal road to pulpit celebrity. The road is toilsome and painstaking, and we trust this young preacher will pursue it with energy and hope.

His discourses generally, evince the possession of a clear head and sound judgment. What he advances is directly connected with his subject, and seems to have been thought over and tested in all its bearings previous to being uttered. His matter is well ordered—the hearer, as it were, sees whence he came and whither he is going—he keeps by the direct road, without strolling or rambling backwards and forwards, from side to side, with no aim in view, and stopping only when tired. It is possible for a preacher of this latter class to be animated and popularly interesting, and such it is that generally start into fame at the commencement of their career. A sanguine temperament and a good opinion of self often supply the place of common sense and logic, and calls are showered upon such by the dozen, while unostentatious talent sometimes lingers unnoticed. We have, not seldom, heard preachers of this class whose fame had previously spread throughout the community, and while admiring the animation of their mouths and eyes, and the vigour of their muscles and lungs, we had only a vague idea of life, shapeless and unorganised, palpitating in the dreary waste of chaos, when the earth was without form and void. An effort of intelligent power was wanting ere it could be said that “it was very good.” The life and animation that can be tolerated in a pulpit must be accompanied by intellect, order, and philosophy, or otherwise it is but sounding *brass*, and will profit the hearers but little.

Personally Mr Orr is about the ordinary stature, of spare habit

of body, and appears to be not more than twenty-six years of age. The expression of his countenance is mild and pleasing, and his broad full brow indicates the abode of intellect. The locality to which he has been appointed is numerously populated, and there can be little doubt, if the preacher acquits himself according to his abilities, he will soon have a full church.

The subject of our notice is a native of Irvine, but was brought up chiefly in Glasgow, and attended the University and Divinity classes here. He acquitted himself creditably at the University, and gained the esteem of his fellow students and teachers. He was licensed as a preacher by the Glasgow Presbytery in January last. During the last two years he acted as a missionary in the Rev. Mr Leckie's congregation at Shettleston, and was similarly employed a considerable time in the Rev. Mr Watson's congregation, St Matthew's. Lately the Church Building Society presented him to St Stephen's Church of this city—a church which, with some dozen besides, was declared, some two years ago, by a legal decision, to belong to the Established Church. St Stephen's was opened about a year ago for public worship; but there being no stated preacher, the attendance was very small. Since Mr Orr's appointment a considerable number of sittings (about 150) have been let, and there is every prospect of a congregation being speedily gathered. Steps are being taken for Mr Orr's ordination, which will take place in a few weeks. He preached one of his trial sermons on Monday in St Stephen's Church; and the other regulations will soon be complied with.

APRIL 26, 1851.

REV. JOHN M'KERROW, D.D.

BRIDGE OF TEITH.

IT is not rare to find persons so glib, and voluble, and fascinating, upon every subject on which conversation may turn, as to convey the impression that they could furnish "The Times," daily, with its three or four columns of leaders without the slightest difficulty; yet present them with pen and paper, and they are at once floundering in the Slough of Despond, getting more entangled at every step, and soon find themselves in an inextricable fix. There are others, again, who seem to be incapable of uttering a dozen words with fluency, who can, from the privacy of the study, discourse with such eloquence that the world listens with breathless eagerness. We have many examples of preachers whose tongue and pen alike contribute to exalt them above their fellows, and extend their fame throughout the world; but we have also not a few instances of ministers destined to permanent and honourable remembrance who have not over-crowded churches. That fame which has its origin only in the voice, will go out with the breath—originating in air, it will ultimately vanish in its own element, and leave posterity ignorant of the fact that its possessor ever had an existence. It is not so with those who have something new and useful to communicate, whether orally or by the press. Newly-discovered truths, or new facts, relating to anciently-discovered ones, have within them the germs of existence; they become plants of that mental paradise which has been progressing and extending from the beginning, and which will continue to give forth its fruit, for the healing of the nations, till truth shall be completely un-

veiled. Among our preachers are some whose pulpit exhibitions are in no way remarkable for learning, style, or intellectual ability, yet whose writings display all these in an eminent degree. Though this is not easily accounted for, it may arise from a particular system of sermon-making, early acquired, or from a conviction that the simpler and less unadorned scriptural truth is presented to the hearers, the more will it tend to edification. In last week's sketch we had to do with a young preacher who is highly attractive, from the poetical imagery and fervid sentiment which abound in his discourses; this week the subject of our remarks is noticeable, from the absence of all such adornments. The former gives promise of becoming great as a pulpit orator—the latter has become celebrated in another walk. There are few ministers so extensively known, and so highly esteemed throughout the body to which he belongs, as is the Rev. Dr M'Kerrow. Anxious to hear and see one who had done such good service in his day, we proceeded to Dr Beattie's church, Gordon Street, where he officiated on Sabbath week. At the usual time he entered the pulpit; and, after the preliminary services, gave out, as text, Deut. xxxiii. 16, "Blessed of the Lord, &c., for the goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush." He commenced by saying,

The period was at length come when Moses was to give up the leadership which he had so long held of the tribes of Israel. He was now 120 years old, and his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated, but the time had come when he must die. He had, by the good hand of God upon him, conducted the tribes to the banks of Jordan, and they were about to cross the river and take possession of the promised land. But Moses was not to be permitted to cross along with them; his body must lie on the opposite side of the Jordan. The reason why he was not permitted to pass over was because on a former occasion, while in Horeb, he smote the rock twice instead of once, as he had been commanded to do, and thus displeased God. Knowing from the intimation of God that his latter end was at hand, he summoned the tribes, and, with all the solemnity of a person standing on the brink of the eternal world, he pronounced on them the blessing contained in this chapter. He

and they were never again to meet in this world, and we may well suppose that in these circumstances they would listen with no ordinary emotion to his instructions. The words selected for text constitute part of the blessing pronounced on the tribe of Joseph. It has been remarked, in the case both of Jacob and Moses, that the blessings pronounced by them on Joseph and his descendants are more full and rich than the blessings pronounced on any of the other tribes. The blessing contained in this passage is more rich than that contained in any other of the clauses, and is well fitted to impart consolation to the people of God. In farther discoursing upon it, we shall consider, 1st, The delightful view given of the character of God, when he is designated in the text as "He that dwelt in the bush;" 2d, The blessedness of those who are the objects of his goodwill. 1st, The delightful view, &c. This has a reference to a remarkable incident that took place in the life of Moses. When keeping watch over the flocks of Jethro he looked round and beheld the burning bush. Such a sight in such a solitary place could not but powerfully attract his attention. He heard a voice out of the midst of the burning bush calling on him to take the shoes off his feet, for the place where he stood was holy ground. The voice was no other than that of God himself, and Moses hid his face. He was then given to understand that the Divine Being was not an indifferent spectator of the oppression of his people, and that he was about to accomplish their deliverance. During the long period of forty years he had such proofs of the goodness of God that he never forgot the interview, and now when about to close his mortal journey he takes peculiar pleasure in recalling it to his remembrance. This designation (1) shows God as a God in covenant with his people. The words "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," intimate that he had entered into a covenant with these patriarchs. That covenant was made with the Father and the Son, and every believer has an interest in it. It was made in the councils of eternity, and was fulfilled by Christ assuming our nature. The blood shed on Calvary was the blood of the new covenant. What an encouraging view this gives of Him who dwelt in the bush! This designation (2) shows God as one that watches over

his people. He said, I have seen the affliction of my people. For a period of two hundred years God watched over them in Egypt, and knew their sorrows ; he watched over them during the whole of that period till the time arrived for their deliverance ; and what he did then for his people he does still, he sees their affliction and knows their sorrows. It matters not in what part of the world they dwell. They may be living among enemies, but the shield of his omnipotence is around them, and he watches over them when they are in the midst of the fires and overrules all events for their good. Though they be forsaken by every earthly friend He leaves them not nor forsakes them. This designation (3) exhibits him as a God all-sufficient for his people. The Israelites had had no reason to despond, even though the obstacles that lay in their way had been greater, for it was Jehovah that sent them a deliverer. A God who is all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good, must be all-sufficient for his people. There can be no difficulty, trial, nor enemy, but he can make them overcome. When you put your trust in fellow-men you lean on a reed, but when you trust in God you rest on a rock. Take comfort, then, from the all-sufficiency of God. Your help lies not in yourselves ; it is to be found in God, and in him alone. They that trust in God shall renew their strength. This designation (4) exhibits him to our notice as a God that redeems his people. When God spake out of the bush it was on an errand of mercy that he came—to bring his people out of a land of bondage to a land flowing with milk and honey. This deliverance was figurative of the deliverance of all his people ; and when he is at any time spoken of as he that dwelt in the bush, it is to exhibit him as a redeeming God. Christ came to redeem us from the greatest of all tyrannies—the tyranny of Satan. Let your minds then think of him as your redeeming God. (Space excludes the discussion under the second head.)

It will be seen, from the above, that the sermon was framed on a principle that, till recently, was all but universally adopted by Scottish preachers, but which is now not quite so general. The system is, no doubt, good, so far as it tends to order and perspicuity ; but when carried to extremes, as it once was,

its formality tends more to beget drowsiness, than to arrest the attention, or excite the feelings, of an audience. In this instance, however, there is no reason for complaint ; the arrangement was clear and natural, and the illustrations simple and scriptural. The introduction particularised the circumstances, directly and relatively, in which the words of the text were uttered. The import of the words, themselves, was then elucidated under two general divisions, each of which had four subdivisions ; and the conclusion was an application of the teachings of the text to the circumstances of the hearers, an arrangement both ample and judicious. The illustrations were extremely simple, and were, for the most part, couched in Scripture phraseology, and the whole pervaded with an affectionate spirit. The discourse, altogether, stood in striking contrast with the elaborate, dreamy, or philosophical lucubrations of one class of famed preachers of the day, and not less with those of another class who endeavour to arrest attention by abrupt, quaint, and startling expressions. We will not attempt to define which, or what, is the proper system to pursue, as we consider that every preacher ought to give his ideas in his own way without regard to particular systems. The sermon before us was attractive, more from the unpretending manner in which it was spoken than for anything peculiarly new or striking in the matter. The preacher is now advanced in years, and his pronunciation and accentuation tell of a long experience with varied life. He speaks, however, with much ease and fluency ; his voice is sharp and firm ; and though his manner lacks the fervour of youth, it is not devoid of animation. His eyes peer dimly from beneath somewhat rugged eyebrows, and the brow itself is unusually lofty and broad, and a pretty dense supply of dark grey hair sweeps across and obscures its upper region. A physiognomist would not be apt to pronounce a verdict peculiarly favourable, so far as regards shrewdness and ability ; but the certificate of a phrenologist would be highly flattering. He is about the common stature, of spare habit, and apparently hale and sound in body as well as in mind. While the worthy doctor's sermons are thus simple and unpretending, the product of his pen is characterised by keen perception, elegance of style, and

great mental vigour. To hear him preach, a person would be apt to suppose that in debate he would prove no very formidable opponent ; but, by the perusal of his writings, we conclude that it would require no ordinary champion to grapple with him with any degree of success. His strictures on Dr Wardlaw's Defence of Congregationalism, recently published in the United Presbyterian Magazine, show that he possesses certain qualities of mind as a polemical writer, little inferior to those of Dr Wardlaw himself. While they are clear, masculine, and cutting, they are, at the same time, generous and friendly ; and, whatever views persons may hold on that subject, they cannot but revere the writer as a man and as a Christian. We wish it not to be understood, however, that his sermons are tame or meagre, or devoid of interest ; but, only that, in comparison with his literary productions, they appear formal, somewhat diffuse, and commonplace.

Though removed from the world as concentrated in cities, he is no indifferent spectator of its position and prospects, socially, morally, and religiously, and occasionally takes up his pen for the purpose of descanting on its faults and its virtues, to encourage what he considers praiseworthy and raise his voice against its errors. This he does intelligently, and in a spirit of liberality, unbiassed neither by particular dogmas nor by party feelings. A life spent in comparative seclusion is apt to narrow the sympathies and prejudice the judgment ; but this is not the case with him—years, while they have brought with them experience, have not weakened the perceptive faculties, and the consequence is that his writings combine the freshness and vigour of youth, with the substantiality and gravity of matured judgment. In the year 1844 a prize of fifty pounds was offered for the best Essay on the "Scriptural Authority, Duties, and Responsibilities, of the Office of Ruling Elder in the Christian Church." The adjudicators appointed were the Rev. Drs Gordon of Edinburgh, and Heugh and Struthers, Glasgow. Nine essays were submitted for competition, and, after due deliberation, the prize was awarded to Dr M'Kerrow. The Essay has been published, and exhibits extensive research and much acute and vigorous reasoning. It is written in a clear, simple, and manly style, and is highly

prized by all Presbyterians, both lay and clerical. His greatest work is the History of the Secession Church—a work which has received the warmest commendations of all whose opinion is of weight on the subject.

Dr M'Kerrow was born at Mauchline in Ayrshire; entered the University of Glasgow in October, 1804; studied divinity under the late learned Dr Lawson of Selkirk; was licensed to preach the gospel by the Secession Presbytery of Kilmarnock in the spring of 1812; and was ordained at Bridge-of-Teith in August, 1813, as successor to the Rev. Dr Fletcher, now of London. In this charge he has laboured for a period of nearly thirty-eight years.

During the time that the Apocrypha controversy was proceeding between the Edinburgh and British and Foreign Bible Societies, he took an active part in favour of the British and Foreign, and published, during the controversy, a *jeu d'esprit* in the form of a pamphlet, entitled "Anti-Apocryphal Beauties of the Edinburgh Christian Journal; with a Dedicatory Epistle to the Rev. Andrew Thomson, D.D., with Notes Critical and Explanatory." The pamphlet bore the signature of "Aliquis." He was one of the original promoters of the Edinburgh Theological Magazine, and for several years contributed liberally to its pages. This magazine, after running the course of seven volumes, received a new title in order to render it more denominational. It became the United Secession Magazine; and since the union between the Secession and the Relief it has received the designation of the United Presbyterian. The Rev. Dr John M'Farlane (now of Glasgow), and Dr M'Kerrow, published, in 1837, a conjoint work, namely, "The Life and Correspondence of the Rev. Henry Belgrave, D.D." In 1839 he published, in two volumes, the "History of the Secession." In 1841 a second edition of the same work was published—a considerable addition being made to it in the form of an Appendix. In 1845 he was successful, as we have mentioned, in a literary competition on the Office of the Ruling Elder. This essay was published in 1846.

REV. W. H. GRAY, M.A.

LADY YESTER'S, EDINBURGH.

THERE are few spectacles in life more impressive and suggestive than that of an aged minister addressing a public audience. Of course our feelings are tempered to a considerable degree by the previous character of the individual. If he has been notable in his day for learning, piety, or philanthropy, these virtues form a halo round his brow, which expands and brightens the nearer he approaches his end; and we regard such a one with something of the feelings with which we contemplate the setting sun. Nor are our feelings in any degree lessened by the circumstance of a few earth-gendered clouds rising up and sailing across the effulgent disc. They speedily return to the earth from whence they came; but the luminary remains undimmed in its native sky. It is with other feelings we regard a young minister. His day is before him, and what may be the phenomena of that day no man can tell. We have seen the morning sky flushed over with what seemed to be the harbingers of a radiant day; but long ere noon these hopeful symptoms have disappeared, and dulness claimed the remainder of the day for its own. Such is often found to be the case with ecclesiastical functionaries. This may be the result of natural weakness in the official, or it may be the result of ease and indolence. In the first instance, a retentive memory may cause a youth to glide like a meteor across the hemisphere of the class room; he may glitter brightly so long as he is acted on by a higher influence; but as soon as it becomes his duty to be the actor, and when his former acquirements require to be remoulded and brought to operate in accordance with peculiar

circumstances, he then ceases to shine ; his triumphs have been already achieved before his practical career has begun. In the latter case many a youth of good natural abilites, who only required continued application and energy to make him rise high above the mass, after getting into a comfortable living, considers his end achieved, and contents himself by getting over his prescribed duties as easily as he can. Such a man is, in a measure, lost to the world. His days and years glide by, and he sinks at last, and leaves behind him no more impression than the hind that cultivates the soil. All those who have made an impression on their age—have never relaxed in their studies—have been students all their days. From the first impulse given them in the school or college they kept urging on, and at length shot far a-head into a region of their own. The subject of our present sketch stands but, as it were, on the threshold of his career, and has yet to determine whether his bright educational career is to be followed by a still brighter pastorate. From one distinguished above his fellows in the class-room, and whose first pulpit appearances have excited so much attention, a brilliant future will be anticipated. On a recent occasion he preached at Perth, in the place which was the scene of his early ministrations, on the text Matthew xxii. 42—“What think ye of Christ ?” He commenced by saying,

To man is given the power to think. And how wonderful in its nature and consequences is the power of thought ! It forms a spiritual world within us, and, like our material world, it is never at rest. Human thought may be dissipated on trifles, or driven forth to outward things to keep us from the agony of self-examination ; but, perverted and abused, it still exists uncrushed and undestroyed. It may exhaust itself by labour and excitement. It may need and seek for relaxation in variety, but even then it finds not absolute repose, and even in our hours of nightly rest its presence is revealed. It may be vain, or evil, or virtuous. It may drive us on to madness by its broodings, or hurry us to the grave by its intensity ; but whether here in pleasure or in pain, or hereafter in our weal or woe, this power of thought remains with man, renewing still its outgoings from day to day in time, from age to age throughout eternity. This rational nature—this thinking principle—is

the earthly root of man's unforbidden tree of knowledge—the fruits of which are power. Thus endowed, behold man finding out many inventions, and almost annihilating time and space; multiplying blessings and advantages of human life by the discoveries he makes; examining the near and distant, and the least and greatest of the wondrous works of God, bringing to our very doors the outmost portions of the earth, and gazing forth on other worlds throughout the universe, and speaking of their form, their distance, and their size, as if they were but islands in the midst of a sea, over whose waters the barque of man could glide. I am, therefore, addressing beings who, by the necessity of their nature, must think. But, What think ye of? It may be "trifles light as air;" it may be vice and crime—there is nothing too little—nothing too vile—as an object for human thought. But neither is there any thing too great or too high for it. Thought wanders through the vale of death and reaches into the eternity beyond. There is no world which it does not try to lay hold of—no height it does not try to climb—no depth it does not try to fathom—it rises to the throne on high—it hovers over the judgment seat—it sits in judgment on the character of God himself. Our thought is free, and there is nothing which it dares not do, as it goes forth unchecked through an unbounded universe and hovers over the future and the past eternity. What think ye of, then? Do ye think of Christ? This is a theme worthy of the powers of man. Let us meditate upon it. What think ye of Christ? 1st, I shall explain the meaning of the words; and, 2d, Dwell a little on some of the answers which may be given to the question of my text. 1st, Then, as to its meaning. Every word, you observe, is emphatic—*What think ye of Christ?* It is not, What do you say of him, or give for his cause, but, What do you *think* of him? I know man is not made for thought alone. But human action springs from human thought. Then, Do our so-called Christian deeds flow from thoughts of love to Christ? It may not be. We may give to a society for which we care but little, and ask, in passing, for a friend of whom we do not think at all. So may we be professing Christians, giving for his cause, and thinking little all the while of Christ. The tradesman may mechanically do his

work, while his thoughts are occupied with other things. The exile's thoughts may be of former friends in some far distant land. Your presence in the house of God is not enough, for it is not the body but the universe which forms the home of thought, and many seeming worshippers there are whose thoughts are far away, and who do not think of Christ. But the question is not, Do ye think? but, *What think ye of Christ?* In this highly-favoured Christian land with Bibles, churches, Sabbaths, sacraments, we must think more or less of Christ. His enemies thought of him during his life, and after his death till he rose again more perhaps than His friends. The wife of Pilate, and the scribes, priests, and elders of the Jews, all thought—were sometimes forced to think—of Christ. But how? Herod thought of Christ as well as the wise men and the shepherds. But the murder of the babes of Bethlehem revealed the nature of his thoughts. His thoughts are those of enemies of Jesus still. If any sword could put to death the Son of God, if any spear could pierce the heart of the Divinity, if the very Godhead could suffer and die, would not the sinner, to escape the punishment of sin, upraise his arm to strike, though it required for his escape the death of God and the destruction of the universe. And there are beings not of earth and not of heaven who think of Christ with earnestness. They are the powers and principalities of hell. For who is there on earth that thinks of Christ with such intensity as Satan does, and has done ever since the fall? Again, the question is—*What think ye of Christ?* It is personal. It is not, whom do others say Jesus is? but, what think ye yourselves of Christ? And, lastly, under this division, I observe, The question is not, what think ye of the quarrellings of sects, the stumblings of Christians, or the pretensions of hypocrites? but, what think ye of *Christ Himself?* Such, then, is the full meaning of the question. I proceed, 2dly, To consider some of the answers which may be given to it. The infidel, and the Socinian, and the Christian, will give each a different reply. 1st. Think of Christ, some say, I think of him as the hero of a wondrous tale, as the principal character in the gospel romance; or, if he lived at all, as one his followers made their prophet, priest, and king—yea, even their God—

just as idolators first make the gods they worship, and then pretend these gods created them. I might reply to these by asking, Do ye think of Jesus even thus—reading the gospels greedily as fictions, weeping over the history of Jesus' sufferings as ye have often done over tales of imaginary woe, and snatching even from your hours of rest the time required for such a narrative? But the wild extravagance of this view is its own refutation. Deny the Scriptures if you will. The facts that Jesus lived and died are still attested both by Jewish and by Pagan history. Is it not true that no man ever spake like Jesus? Is His life a mere invention—His character a forgery—His history a fable? Hear Rousseau, himself no partial witness, having no desire to think the gospel true, admitting that the morality of the gospel and its general tone were beyond the conception of Jewish authors, and that the history of Christ bears marks of truth so perfectly inimitable that the inventor would excite our admiration more than its hero. Or do you deny that Christ wrought miracles? Go, hear the words of Julian, the apostate Emperor of Rome, living in an age when fraud—if such had been—was likely to have been detected and exposed. He spoke of Jesus as having rebuked the winds, and walked on the sea, and healed the lame, and cast out devils in Bethsaida and Bethany. Or do you doubt any of the prophecies which were delivered by Christ? Go, read Josephus' History of the Destruction of Jerusalem, and say if it is not a commentary on that prophecy of Christ. But exercise your powers of thought, and surely this must be your answer to the question of my text. No man could speak the words and do the works of Christ unless God were with him. 2d. But this may be your answer. Jesus was a teacher sent from God, but nothing more. This will not do. He claimed to be Divine, and said that He was one with God. If He was not the eternal Son of God He was an imposter; and would God have given an imposter the power of working miracles to attest a lie? If He was only a good man, why His sufferings? And whence His groans and agonies, and prayers and tears, if God was not then laying on Him the transgressions of us all? Others, Scotland's hero, for example, have had bodily sufferings as

great, and borne them unflinchingly. But if the Divine and human natures were united in Him who bore the burden of our guilt—if His Divinity gave an infinite weight as well as an infinite efficacy to His sufferings—if the very Shepherd of Israel was smitten with the sword of justice while the Lamb of God was sacrificed, then all is plain, from the “Lo! I come” of prophecy unto the “My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” unto the “It is finished” on the cross. 3d. But surely there are many here who can give another answer to the question, What think ye of Christ? receiving Him in all His offices as their Prophet, Priest, and King. These three points were then illustrated, and the sermon concluded thus: Think, then, of Jesus as your friend. He deserves such thoughts, and they will profit you. If you believe a person friendly, you can trust him, though he do what might alarm you otherwise. If you think him hostile, you suspect and fear him, even when he brings you gifts. Thus afflictions to Christ’s enemies are fiery tortures; to His friends they are a purifying furnace to refine the gold. Death in an unbelieving family circle is the blighting of a lovely flower; in a believing one it is the Voice of the Lord walking in the garden, plucking for himself that blooming flower, placing it in His own bosom, and taking it away to adorn some mansion of His Father’s house on high. These thoughts of love to Christ will not unfit you for the business of life, or withdraw your thoughts and love from things and beings round you here. Who, indeed, can rejoice like the Christian amid nature’s beauties, or do so willingly the work of life, or love with such a depth and purity of love as he? It is not the Christian whose thoughts of Christ make him refuse to think of others as he ought. It is the unbeliever who inconsistently closes his eyes on scenes of beauty, or shuts his heart against such deeds performed by Christ as would, if done by those around him, fill his bosom with admiring love and praise. He looks on the flower of the field, broken by the storm, bowing its head in fading brightness, withering in the midst of the desolations of sin; and it, he says, calls up within him “thoughts that lie too deep for tears,” and yet he sees without emotion him who was the Rose of Sharon, and the

altogether lovely, bowing down his head by reason of a storm—how terrible!—and drooping and dying because of the transgressions of a guilty world. The tear starts to his eyes, as he tells you of devoted and self-sacrificing human love—of the noble son, who, watching from the shore some wrecked ones buffetting despairingly amid the waters, shrank not from the waves, but bore them safely to the shore and to his father's house. And yet he thinks not of the love of the Son of God, who, seeing from the shores of immortality us human beings wrecked upon the sea of life, shrank not himself from floods of death to bear us to these shores of immortality, to dwell for ever with his Father there. All this, far more than this, has Jesus done for man. What think ye now of Christ?

It was generally said, when Mr Caird left Lady Yester's, that it would be no easy matter to get one to fill his place. The question of a successor to such a one has very curious philosophical aspects. No one will suppose that the people accustomed to listen to his wholesome instructions would tolerate any one unsound in the faith. The people to whom a Bennie and a Caird successively ministered must know the truth theoretically, and be able at once to detect error in its most subtle forms. From what we have seen of the successor of these men he seems to possess one of the first requisites of pulpit success in an eminent degree. He is remarkably earnest and animated in his pulpit appearance. He reads the Scriptures well, his voice is clear, his enunciation distinct, and his gestures and manner, in general, are unexceptionable. The appearance of the preacher prepossesses a stranger in his favour. He is apparently under thirty years of age, of thin habit, and clear complexion. When he commences to read the Psalm it is obvious to every one that he has paid great attention to reading. He enunciates distinctly, and so uses emphatic words as to throw a very full significance into the matter. As far as regards the article of speaking we know few more effective orators. Such is his great fluency of speech that he is never at a loss to express even but imperfectly formed ideas. Notes he has lying before him, but we should doubt whether he confines himself to their teachings. That he is a useful preacher there is no room to question—that he is a

popular one the fact that he occupies his present sphere is proof. The hearer is led from one sunny spot to another; he luxuriates in the brightness of a summer day, and inhales the balmy breath of a thousand flowers. His language is always chaste, and his sentences well rounded. His voice is clear and mellow. He pitches upon a high key, and moves on without break or interruption.

The discourse, of which we have given a pretty full outline, speaks significantly of the preacher's powers as an orator. One is struck with the easy flow of language which characterizes it. There is nothing forced—nothing unnatural—but, on the contrary, the hearer sees opening before him a landscape of surpassing loveliness. He is not startled by sudden revelations, but he is edified by a succession of fair and graceful images which bear form, proportion, affinity, and relationship. The preacher finds every word of his short text to be emphatic, and deduces from each matter of grave importance and personal application. As he proceeds his subject opens gradually in growing majesty. He begins by showing that religion consists not in forms—it is a thing with which the intellect and feelings have to do. He goes on to show that thought must not only be aroused, but fixed on Christ as the centre, and that even thoughts of Christ, however anxious and constant, will never save, else Judas, and Pilate, and Herod had been saved;—but they thought hardly, and falsely, and maliciously of Christ. Those who would benefit by reflection on Jesus must have correct views of his person and work—must think of him as he is *revealed*, and not as he may be *fancied* by a vain imagination. The discourse rose from the least to the greatest. The hearer was led gradually on from a drivelling formality in religion to lofty conceptions and right views of Christ and of his work. We need not say that such a discourse is calculated to be very beneficial. It was Paul's favourite theme, and has ever since been the chief topic of every successful preacher. There was much in the discourse alike calculated to alarm the infidel and lead him to a better state of mind. He was confronted with stern facts, and shut up to the necessity of admitting them, and inferences were drawn with such fairness and care as to prevent all escape. There was also much in the sermon cal-

culated to correct false notions of Christianity and vague and incorrect views of the person of Christ. The discourse showed very satisfactorily how the religion of Jesus has to do immediately with the thought, the will, the purpose, the feeling. The test thus given greatly aided to distinguish between the man whose religion lies in forms and those who worship God in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus. There was much eloquent illustration and much urgent application interspersed with the graphic description.

Mr Gray was born in the Carse of Gowrie; educated in Perth; then at the University of St Andrew's, where he graduated. He carried off high honours at the Grammar School, the College, and the Hall. He was licensed by the Perth Presbytery in 1846, and the same year ordained minister of St Paul's, Perth. He was translated to Lady Yester's in May, 1850, and is there so popular that above 150 sittings more were let in Feb., 1851, than at the corresponding season of the previous year. In his Perth charge, before he left it, his parish and communion roll were both larger than in Lady Yester's. But of course the public duties there are heavier, and the fact that one half of his parishioners are, or profess to be, Romanists, must make his duties often not very pleasant. He is well known as the supporter of Sabbath Schools. In St Paul's in Perth, there was no school when he went: there were nearly 400 scholars when he left it.

REV. NORMAN M'LEOD,

BARONY PARISH, GLASGOW.

THOUGH the Glasgow pulpit has long been very respectably filled, there have, periodically, arisen men who have formed a marked era in its progress. When the city was in a state of religious apathy young Gray* arose, whose brief ministry aroused many a burgess, and whose works are still useful, inspiring thousands with new life and zeal. Towards the close of the last century a Balfour was followed by thousands, who were impressed as well as electrified with his fascinating eloquence. When a cold orthodoxy had again crept over many of the clergy and congregations of Glasgow a Chalmers was sent, and, by his arousing eloquence, changed the entire preaching of the National Church in our city. Such an impetus did evangelical religion receive from him that ever since a form of sound words has been kept up in almost every Established and Dissenting church in the city. It is to be feared, however, that the tendency of late years has been, on the part of the more influential clergy of the city, to lose sight of the sinner in the citizen—to address their congregations more as respectable people than as sinners needing salvation. Not a few, who are really evangelical in their sentiments, continue so to address their hearers as to make them believe that they are on the whole very good people, and need Christ only in sermons, and that not very often—that with His objective work, and their own subjective excellence and respectability, they are pretty sure of heaven. If we mistake not the subject

* The Rev. Andrew Gray, who was admitted to the Outer High Church in 1653, nearly 200 years ago.

of our sketch has a very important mission to our city—as regards this *respectable* preaching—preaching too polite to admit harsh words, and that scarcely allows in its very smooth phraseology the name of God or his adversary. He seems to have been sent to our city to tell the frequenters of the sanctuaries of the National Zion what the sturdy prophet told the dwellers of Jerusalem on the banks of the Jordan—to revive the doctrines of apostles and martyrs in all their unvarnished majesty—to tell rich and poor, small and great, that the way to heaven changes not with man's circumstances, but that it is still the narrow way, guarded by the strait gate. On Sabbath last, in Barony Church, at 20 minutes to 12, he announced, for subject, Luke xv. 10, &c. The verses selected contain the story of the prodigal son. As the lecture has been published at length in the Edinburgh Christian Magazine we repeat it not here. In the afternoon he preached from 1st Cor. iii. 22, 23, “Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.” He said, Most men look upon God as an exactor—but he is a bountiful giver, and we are but the recipients of His bounty. Even those things which seem to be a taking from us are really a giving to us of better things in the best way. What is the gospel but an outpouring of God's exuberant bounty upon a lost and ruined world? It is the unspeakable gift. It is the unspeakable gift of God's own Son, and with him all things—for if we have Christ, all things are ours. What is the ground of the believer's possessions? He has oneness with Christ in mind, spirit, and will. Inheritance is attached to character; and believers being one with Christ in glory and character—even as He, the Mediator, is one in the same glory of character—with God, they become as sons, born of the Spirit, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. This unity originated in the love of God the Father; is rendered possible, and secured, by the death and life of God the Son, and is realised in believers through the indwelling in them of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. Thus our being Christ's, even as Christ is God's, all things are also ours. We share, as far as creatures can, the glorious possessions of Christ,

as Mediator, even as he shares the possessions of God. This is an inheritance which those who have not the Spirit have no conception of at all. Even the servants of God have but feeble glimmerings of it. But they enjoy a portion of it here—for they receive its *earnest*. Though no bodily eye has seen, or ear heard, what God hath kept for those who love him, yet he hath revealed them to us by his Spirit; and by Him we know the things that are freely given *us* of God. The apostle also specifies some things possessed by the believers here—the world, life, death, &c. The believer possesses all the real good which can possibly come from all those sources of good. He possesses the world. It was made by his Father, and is governed by his Brother; all its beauty was made for his eye, and its music for his ear. Whatever portion he requires of it for his body he will get. He will, however, be contented with what his Father gives, preferring the immense riches of a little with God in all rather than the poverty of all without God in anything. Life is his. Life in all its varied relationships, with its duties, trials, &c. This life, just as it is, is the best possible scene for him. Nowhere else in the universe could he so prove his loyalty, improve his talents, or lay up such treasures of future joy, as in this present world. Life, here, therefore, is a glorious gift—is to be improved for the hereafter—and all that happens in life must work together for the believer. In every item of the complex scene of things with which he stands related in the providence of God there is a good for him. Life works for him, shines for him, darkens for him, and is his! Death, too, is his. It is no taker away, but a giver to him of blessings which could not be given to him in any other way so well. From scenes of death he has obtained his deepest life. When death comes to himself he welcomes it as a friend. The world and life have not ceased to be as lovely as ever to him; but death says, “I bring thee to new heavens, and a new earth. There are melodies unheard more beautiful than have ever yet greeted thine ear—duties more delightful than ever engaged thee here—society more congenial to thy wants than the best ever met with here. I bring thee to ten thousand thousand loving friends who are ready to bid thee welcome; and never more shall I come for

thee again, because I can bring thee no higher blessings." "To be with Christ," says the believer, "is indeed far better." To me all is gain. "O death, where is thy sting?" He is gone! Death is his. But the apostle mentions things present and things to come. The things present may be very painful to us, as they were to him; for his Master did he suffer even till that present hour in which he wrote. But whatever these things may be, God comes in them all with a blessing to the believer. But, "things to come." And what may these things be? What may come to us from the womb of time, or from out the dim recesses of eternity? Had a human being, endowed with the spirit of prophetic foreknowledge, and entering upon life shortly after man's creation, seen all the things that have been since that period until now—and had he been told that he must live and act throughout this long course of years until time should be no more—would he not have been crushed by the thought, and desired to have departed in peace? But what if we saw at this moment all that is before us, even before our short day closes?—our trials, dangers, sufferings—how greatly would our spirits be affected! Death must come. When and how? The resurrection must come, and general judgment. But when these are past eternity is still before us. And where will we be? What will we be doing? In what far-off mysterious scene shall our lot be cast? Whom shall we know? What things shall come to us during the never-ending life which God has given us? When such questions press themselves upon us while conscious of our present feebleness no wonder if we would feel appalled. But we need not. Things to come are ours. We may gaze, by faith, upon all space and time as calmly as on the sunset of a summer's sky. For whether can we flee from thy presence? God is with us—God's hand will uphold us. It is enough! Let death come—it is ours! We need fear no evil, for he is with us. Let the resurrection come—it is ours! A Saviour's voice will call us forth, and a Saviour's hand raise us up. Let judgment come—it is ours! A Saviour's blood will justify us, and his righteousness adorn us. Let eternity come—it is ours! A Saviour's love will satisfy us, and his presence rejoice us, and his servants and angels be our companions for ever!

"I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come," nor anything in creation, "can separate us from the love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." But I hope you will see all things being ours depends upon this one thing—giving our hearts to Jesus. Without this all things are not for us but against us. You may think giving your hearts to him a small matter, but upon it depends whether the universe will be to you a heaven or a hell, or a hell without a heaven, just as the opening or shutting of the eyes will determine whether, to you, the universe will be veiled in darkness or full of light! In conclusion, I cannot help remarking how dreadful the folly will appear at judgment of those who have in this life separated from Christ. Many a man who would despise making the grosser sins the pursuits of his unholy life has nevertheless, by giving the present to science, the cultivation of the fine arts, or the love of the beautiful in nature, thrust God out of his spirit. How terrible for such a one to see those very mercies enjoyed by the poor enslaved ones of the earth, who never possessed such blessings here, but who humbly served God, and followed him! How dreadful for a proud, pampered, ungodly man, who made God's gifts the very means of forgetting or hating the Giver, to have all these removed, and nothing left but what God never gave—an impenitent heart! while the most despised saint enters upon the eternal possession of these gifts and enjoyments in their most perfect form! What music is this that greets their ears? When did earth ever catch an echo of such choral bursts of praise as now ascend from the countless millions of the redeemed, and in whose triumphant song the humblest saint can join? Beauty! Scenery!—Let earth veil itself in darkness before the sublime spectacle which meets the eye at Christ's second coming, and which is but the entrance-gate of the inexhaustible treasures of creation possessed by the most wretched beggar in Christ's house. Company!—All the rank, intelligence, and genius, and the royalty of the King's Palace, are here assembled. Science! It can be pursued unerringly for ever! O believer, with Christ all things are thine! O sinner, without Him thou hast nothing. The world is thine enemy—life, thy death—and death, thy destruction. Things present are

against thee, and things to come shall come to thee, for ever, full of indescribable horrors and unutterable woe !

The introductory services gave but a very imperfect idea of the characteristics of this preacher. He reads the Psalms correctly, but his reading has nothing marked about it. His prayers are excellent and contain not a few fine thoughts, but there is sometimes an abruptness in his transitions from one topic to another. There are apparent seriousness, vigorous thought, strong common sense, and a deep acquaintance with Scripture and the human heart; but not that continuity, that pleasing and gradual evolution of feeling and sentiment, which gives additional interest to that important exercise. The discourses were both well worthy of remark, but we must confine ourselves to the first, only observing that the afternoon sermon was exceedingly appropriate, and was in a manner a continuation of the forenoon's discourse. In the forenoon man was seen going his course without God, and in the afternoon the happiness of the returned and accepted prodigal was powerfully pourtrayed. The entire sermon was excellent, and the peroration highly eloquent. In the few introductory remarks of the forenoon discourse, which many of our readers may have seen in the periodical mentioned in the introduction of this sketch, the preacher strongly suggested the force which circumstances gave to the three parables of the chapter. The preacher, having given the narrative the advantage of the circumstances, proceeded to apply its facts—not to nations—but to individual character. In illustrating such a narrative it is necessary to preserve inviolate its symmetry, and not to force the story into what is incongruous or untrue. The preacher observed this perfectly unless in the outset. His first illustration, which was of itself exceedingly important, was rather forced from the words, and gave the narrative an aspect which is not altogether consistent with fact. The request of the young man to have his portion did not certainly indicate of itself any want of confidence in his father. The preacher, indeed, could not mean that when young men receive their portion, and leave the paternal roof, there is any necessary want of confidence in the parental wisdom. But though the fact of the young man requesting his portion will

scarcely admit of the want-of-confidence inference, it admits of no doubt that the preacher's counterpart was absolutely and universally true. Men leave God because they place no confidence in his wisdom, and no faith in his love and goodness. This fact the preacher brought out in strong lights, and showed how unbelief is at the foundation of apostacy, and the first of a series of fatal steps towards the farthest removes from God. The other points, taken up by the preacher, were all suggested and borne out fully by the narrative. The young man's progress was drawn with a master's hand. He was kept before the audience, not so much as an individual as the type of all who live without God, and so justly was his case depicted as to almost compel the confession from not a few that *they* were the men. The man's wilfulness, wickedness, and madness, were brought out at every step of his progress, and the grace of the Father was magnified and extolled.

The deep earnestness of this preacher is what probably strikes a stranger most. In prayer his voice trembles with the burden of his thoughts and feelings; and in preaching the countenance, the attitudes, the voice, all tell significantly of the earnestness of the inner man. If we mistake not, his preaching will at present be almost a new feature of the Glasgow pulpit. Already men occupy it whose metaphysical acumen, whose profound research, whose brilliant fancy, whose characteristic piety, have commended them to the citizens and to the world. But there is in this preacher more of a Knox and a Whitfield than in almost any other we know. His appeals to the conscience and the heart, his palpable representations of practical truth, his broad statements of man's universal degeneracy, his fearless exposure of impiety in all its forms, in high and humble life, are certainly not equalled in many cases that have come under our notice. He has neither taste nor time for metaphysical disquisitions, for fine-drawn distinctions between disputed doctrines, for compliments to refined humanity without God, but he preaches man's degeneracy from his state of innocence, and man's guilt as a sinner, man's repentance and conversion on his return to God, and man's privileges as an adopted son of God Almighty. There is with him no confounding of educational polish with

inward change, no rasping down the high requirements of the gospel to suit the tastes of the learned and the rich, but when addressing poor and rich his voice echoes the Great Master's "Except ye repent ye shall all perish." We do not mean to say that he is the only one who declares the whole counsel of God —we merely say that he declares a part of that counsel in a very marked and peculiar form. He seems to see, more vividly than others, men hastening to eternity under various delusions, and therefore puts forth more vigorous effort to arouse and alarm them. When, for instance, he touches on that most difficult of subjects, human freedom—a subject about which not a few split hairs for a whole lifetime—he thus dismisses it:—"Men may find reasons to satisfy their intellects that there are causes foreign to themselves that keep them from being saved; but at the last day, when before the great white throne, they will feel that there were none." He seems to have a strong impression that it is not arguments, not elaborate periods, not brilliant fancy, that will do man good. Facts he crowds on facts, appeals on appeals. He has the art, above most preachers, of making his hearers look inward on their own hearts. Many can hold up pretty pictures to their hearers, pictures which they greatly admire, but he reveals themselves—he makes known the thoughts and intents of the heart, and makes his auditors think more about themselves than about the subject—more about their own condition than that of others. This being his aim and object, he is by no means particular about his style. It is sometimes rugged, even harsh, but always forcible. There are passages of great brilliancy and beauty, but his terse sayings remind one of a Russell (Dundee), who was wont to pour forth masses of matter, as Mount Etna poured forth its lava—masses ponderous, burning, and sublime. Instead of finely-rounded periods he frequently runs his words together to allow him to get forward. We instance, "he's," for he is; "I'm," for I am, &c., the pronoun coalescing with the verb to save syllables. This abruptness of style is in his case characteristic. One could not wish it otherwise. It were as reasonable to censure the long, loose, yet brilliant, periods of a Chalmers as the rugged, burning fragments thrown forth by this preacher.

His descriptive and illustrative powers are very great, and

though he is luxuriant both in ideas and language there is, at the same time, richness and consistency. The gaudy gewgaw style of ornamentation, which is often mistaken for the fruits of a bright imagination, but which generally indicates a weak head and warm heart, is not a characteristic of his preaching. He employs no ornament that enhances not the value of that which it is meant to adorn. There is nothing heavy or minutely elaborate in the superstructures he raises; but all is light, airy, and spacious. Argumentation, or close, dry, abstract reasoning, is not his *forte*. He goes to the Sacred Writings, not as to a book of problems on which to wrangle with the atheist or casuist, but as to a storehouse of indisputable facts, which it is his function to unfold in all their variety and beauty, and allow them to make their way to the hearts of his hearers through their own intrinsic worth. His great command of language and his ardent temperament enable him to do this with great effect. The variety of aspects in which he presents his subject or idea, the buoyancy and rapidity of his utterance, and the somewhat and abrupt unpolished pronunciation are quite Chalmerian in character, though not equal in degree. Though he rushes along with great animation he never gets into those passionate vortices which were so overwhelming in his great prototype. If Chalmers was a whirlwind he is the fresh and fragrance-wasting breeze—if the one awed by his power and grandeur the other captivates by his luxuriance and beauty. Commiseration for the unfortunate and the fallen, so energetically exemplified by Chalmers, is also a prominent feature in the character of our preacher.

We anticipate he will be a great acquisition to the Glasgow staff of working ministers. Though Chalmers did much to raise the fallen, and impart light where there was only darkness; and though much has since been done, and is still doing, more still requires to be done, both in the pulpit and out of it, and therefore an energetic minister, in such an influential position as that of the Barony, will be a blessing to the community. As to the personal appearance of our preacher, we may say it is by no means that of a book-worm. He is as plump and well favoured as either clergyman or man of the world needs be. We know not whether it be the results of a pulse

diet or not, but we question if any of the three Hebrew youths were more fair or well favoured than he is, yet he is active, elastic, prepossessing, and youthful. He would not appear at any disadvantage beside the plumpest English bishop, while in elasticity and activity he has few equals among hard-working Presbyterian ministers.

His intellect is of a high order. His are not the declamations of a brainless enthusiast—they are the weighty sayings of a strong massive mind. Men of education and taste can despise the ravings of a wild enthusiasm; but there are here what no man can despise—there are thought, reason, sense, and feeling, finely blended. Mr M'Leod is an orator, and not an imitator. He follows no school but nature—nature that designed him to stand forth in his own independence—and refuses to obsequiously follow any man, however renowned.

Mr M'Leod's platform appearances are very attractive. On topics that admit of pleasantry he shows that he possesses genuine wit and humour, and in discussing grave subjects there are power and pathos in his appeals.

Mr M'Leod was born in Campbelton, Argyleshire, and went through the gown classes in Glasgow. He studied divinity under Dr Chalmers in Edinburgh, and spent a year in various parts of the Continent (which he has frequently visited since) before taking license. He studied his last half year in Glasgow, and was presented to Loudon—where he preached with several candidates—on the 15th March, 1838. He was elected unanimously by the Town Council of Edinburgh to the Tolbooth Church of that city, and he had several others in his offer in 1843, but accepted the offer of Dalkeith, which was made to him the same day by the Duke of Buccleuch. He has had opportunities of going to Edinburgh since, but has always refused. And now he has been elected by the elders, people, and heritors, of the Barony Parish, Glasgow, which he has accepted.

He has been employed very frequently in deputations on ecclesiastical affairs to London, addressing missionary meetings, and founding missionary associations; and was chosen by the General Assembly to accompany Dr Simpson and his uncle, Dr John M'Leod, to visit the churches in the colonies of

North America in 1846—the first missionary deputation ever sent there by the Church of Scotland.

Besides these abundant labours Mr M'Leod is editor of the Christian Magazine, which is now in its third volume, and has a circulation of about 5000, and is conducted on the most liberal principles.

As to civil politics, we believe the subject of our sketch has never meddled with them since he was ordained. As regards church polity, he is a conservative, and ever voted with the "moderate party" till 1843. But while he conserved the constitution, as he understood it, he has ever wished reforms to the fullest extent within its limits, and is willing at any time to see it modified to suit the constant changes in society. He has ever entertained the most catholic feelings towards all Christians. He has been a warm friend to the Evangelical Alliance, having been a member from its commencement presiding at one of its great meetings in London, and being the chairman for a year of the Edinburgh Division, and he has on several occasions expressed his resolution to adhere to that excellent institution. He has preached some of the annual sermons for the Wesleyan missions in London. He has been always constant in his steady adherence to the Church of Scotland as is by law established, and no less steady and consistent in his love and desire for the fellowship of all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

MAY 24, 1851.

R E V. W. S. THOMSON,

BRIDGE-END, DUMBARTON.

TILL a comparatively recent period Scotland was a reality—her inhabitants were Scotchmen, who had permanent homes, permanent labour, permanent friends, and a permanent church. Even in death, families were seldom divided, and generation after generation were gathered to the same narrow house when their labours were ended. But now family circles are scarcely formed till they are broken up and separated, to labour apart, live apart, die, and be buried apart. Thus it is, that while we are condemning communism in a legalised form, circumstances are compelling us into one of its objectionable phases. The changes that have taken place on the outward aspect of the country is no less striking. Rural hamlets have disappeared, and commercial villages and towns have arisen; rugged wastes and sterile mountain sides have been converted into fields that yield their annual tribute of yellow corn, and in vales where shepherds piped and milkmaids chanted, and cattle browsed, are heard the endless grating of iron-teethed machinery, and the snorting of the locomotive. But in no particular is the change more apparent than in the number and character of our churches. Church accommodation has, for some years past, been engaging the attention of all denominations, and in some districts where, a few years ago, there was but one church, it is not uncommon to find a dozen, not at all the humble meeting-house either, but boasting of all the dignity of a classical style of architecture. However, specimens of the olden day are still sometimes to be met with, standing by the wayside, reminding a person of some aged and venerable man

whose robes are not of the fashionable cut. Of this the United Presbyterian Church, Bridge-End, Dumbarton, is a specimen. This was wont to be the rallying point (with one exception) of the Dissenters for many miles around. The villages and hamlets of the Vale of Leven sent forth every Sabbath morning goodly numbers of the followers of Gillespie, who, in sunshine or storm made their way thither, with not the slightest idea that a church three, four, or five miles distant was an inconvenience. Now, however, all these villages have more church accommodation than persons willing to be accommodated, and, consequently there is less occasion to go elsewhere to worship. Last Sabbath the pastor of the church, who is named above, appeared in the pulpit at a quarter past eleven. After praise, prayer, and the reading of a portion of Scripture, he proceeded with the usual exposition of the Gospel by Matthew. The portion on this occasion was in the 23d chap. 35th verse—the subject being the crucifixion of Christ. The lecture was highly interesting, but our space forbids us giving an outline. In the afternoon, after praise, &c., he gave, for text, Rev. xxii. 17—"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." He commenced by saying, that although the glorious gospel of the grace of God was proclaimed from the earliest ages of the world, yet it was by no means with the same degree of fullness, plainness, and sufficiency, as in the latter days of the church. The first intimation of a Saviour, that, "the Seed of the woman," &c., did little more than signify the advent of one in human nature who should come and take vengeance on the great adversary of souls. The promise made to Abraham, and renewed to the patriarchs, that in their "seed all the families," &c., intimated more clearly the blessings that should flow to mankind through the promised Messiah, while the predictions of the latter prophets indicated the divine nature of the Saviour and the blessings he should confer upon the world. In them we find the most sublime and elevated delineations of the later-day glory. The church of Christ is described as destined to fill the whole earth, while Jew and Gentile alike are united to enjoy its benefits, and the

dispensation of the Spirit, and the happy effects of his **gracious** influences are plainly revealed. When our Saviour commanded his disciples to go abroad over all the earth and preach the gospel to every creature—when, in obedience to his command, his disciples commenced their great enterprise, and, beginning at Jerusalem, carried the tidings of a crucified Saviour into many lands—when churches were established in scenes far remote from the place where Christianity was first promulgated—and when from each of them there sounded forth, around the adjacent territories, the word of life—then all obscurity had passed from the gospel message, and the Sun of righteousness, beautifully described by the ancient prophet, had risen on the earth. It was then, when the energies of the gospel were in full operation, that the words of the text were uttered by the divine Redeemer. Ere the vision had ceased and the prophecy was for ever sealed, the Saviour inscribed these words on the last page of the Holy Bible. These words may be said to be the last solemn declaration of the gospel message. They are followed by a denunciation of the wrath of God against any who shall add to, or detract from, the words of this book. Recorded on the final page of the word of God, they intimate that the great mystery is finished—that the scheme of redemption is complete—and that all that remains is for the sinner to come, for “all things are ready.” In conjunction with the words that follow, their signification is that no other means of salvation, no other offer of mercy shall be made—and that if men are guilty of despising the invitations of the gospel “there remaineth no more sacrifice,” &c. God, whose name and memorial throughout all generations is the Lord God merciful and gracious, has stamped the signet of mercy on his blessed volume. The Spirit and the bride say, “Come,” &c. We shall more particularly direct your attention to the three following heads:—I. With what object this call is made. 1st. By the cleansing property of water is intimated the purifying influence; and, 2d, By the refreshing property of water is indicated the invigorating and animating nature. 3d, To distinguish it from all other—water of life. The blessings secured to mankind by the death of Christ are frequently described in metaphorical language, but, at the

same time, of a most appropriate character. While it represents Christ in some very striking aspect, it also represents men in a situation to bear out in a striking manner the force of the figure. Is man described as in spiritual darkness? Jesus Christ is represented as the Sun of righteousness. Is man described as a sheep wandering, and unable of himself to find his way back? Jesus is represented as the Shepherd that leads him back to the fold. Is man represented as a prisoner under the bondage of Satan? Christ proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. But by no image is the Saviour so frequently represented to us as under the image of water—which harmonises excellently with the cleansing and gladdening influence of the gospel. We cannot appreciate this image so well as those in eastern countries, where water is scarce. In describing Christ as a source of spiritual drink the Bible represents him as everything that is vivifying. Isaiah says, “Ho, ye that thirst;” Zecharia, “In that day shall there be a fountain opened;” our Lord himself says, “If any man thirst;” and also in the passage before us, “And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” This figure is simply designed to illustrate the great objects of the gospel, in the first place, by the cleansing properties of water, as intimating the purifying influences of the Saviour’s blood. On no point are the Scriptures more explicit than on man’s depravity. “God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions.” God made man pure, but now he is corrupt. Every thinking individual must see how offensive and detestable sin is to God, who is completely holy. Sin presents a great barrier to the sinner’s acceptance with Jehovah. His truth has been perverted to the minds of men in every age. The heathen blends sacrifices and oblations to imaginary gods. The Psalmist exclaims, “If thou shouldst mark iniquity, who could stand?” Micah exclaims, “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old?” &c. There is no man who forms any correct idea of the character of Jehovah, and contrasts it with his own sinful and polluted state, but would exclaim, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Such was the impres-

sion on the mind of Job, when he said, "Now mine eye seeth thee." Isaiah, when he beheld God in his glory, says, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!" It is then, my brethren, the appropriation of Jesus Christ to man, as a guilty and sinful being, that is designed by the metaphor of water. To that source believers of all ages have repaired. Its efficacy forms the adoration of the multitude of the redeemed, who sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," &c. And still, the Spirit and the bride call on every one to come and take the water of life freely. 4th, Its refreshing properties are indicative of the invigorating and animating nature of the gospel of Jesus. This idea was illustrated at some length. II. By whom the invitation is made. 1, By the Spirit. The great office of the Spirit is to bring souls to Christ, in the first instance; and, in the second, to nourish, strengthen, &c. The Spirit says, "Come," by the Word of God, its threatenings, promises, warnings, &c. By the preachers of the gospel, then, the cross is exalted; by the dispensations of Providence, general or relative affliction, showing the insufficiency of the present world, death, &c.; and no soul will finally perish without the deep condemnation of having resisted the Spirit's influence, and trampled on his grace. 2, And the Bride also says, "Come." The Bride means the Church, the whole Church, as is stated in the Song of Solomon, in the Revelations, and in several of the Prophets—the Church of all denominations whose members are sincere believers. The words of the apostle are, "Pray that your fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus." They take a very unscriptural view of the gospel who think that they require to make no efforts for the conversion of the world. What would we think of the physician who would neglect his duty when the community suffered from the plague?—so is it the case precisely with the Church that would withhold the balm of Gilead from their fellow men. Well, then, may the gospel be termed "living waters," and such are the waters you and I and all are invited to partake. 3, Him that heareth is commanded to say, "Come." By this term is most certainly meant the private members of the Church, not the office-bearers, but those who hear. The conditions imposed

on all who hear it are to advance the kingdom of Christ as far as they can around them. Such is the duty of every believer. It is by no means a spirit of selfishness, but of the fullest philanthropy. He who possesses it will feel it to be a living faith, and will encourage and warn all around him. Nor will the believer be limited to his own family. The same feeling that would urge a man to snatch a fellow being from a conflagration should urge the believer to save souls from destruction. Such was the spirit that prompted the ancient prophets and apostles, and such a spirit ought to be manifested in the life of all of us. III. To whom this invitation is addressed. To him that thirsteth—seriously alarmed by a sense of guilt and danger, and thirsting for pardon, reconciliation, deliverance, &c.; but it is not addressed to any particular classes of mankind. The invitations of the gospel are free and unlimited. They set forth a universal Saviour, and invite all to taste of the waters of life. In the text this is clearly shown. Limited! No. “Whosoever will, let him come.” The young—and those who are actively engaged in the business of life, &c. I hope there are none before me who are heedless and indifferent about their soul’s salvation, but if there be one, I would say, “Come.” Ye cannot serve God and mammon with success. If ye have not sought the Lord let this day terminate your indifference. This may be the last of your opportunities. God is still gracious, and the streams of living water are abundant. Finally, Every believing Christian is invited to come, and take more copious draughts. If faith begin to fail, or temptations to prevail against you, come to the living waters; here are refreshment, hope, and all that are necessary to fortify you against every foe.

The first division of the discourse occupied so much space that the others were necessarily but partially developed. The subject was introduced by a short sketch of the progress of the gospel from the first gleam of hope imparted to Adam ere he left Paradise to the time when it was completed and sealed in the Isle of Patmos. The divisions were then announced, and afterwards elucidated under a variety of sub-divisions. The discourse was strictly practical; for, although the text gave ample scope for the argumentative preacher, all controversy was avoided. The gospel was represented as freely offered to

all, and the duty of all to lay hold on it was urged with much force and fervency. The preacher did not strive to embellish his discourse by displays of logic or of secular learning, but drew his proofs and illustrations solely from the sacred pages. A copious use was made of the illustrations and imagery of the sacred writers, showing that, of all books, his delight is in the Bible. His discourses display more feeling than fancy, and hence his appeals to the hearts of his hearers are the most striking phases of his pulpit ministrations. These are composed of fervid sentiment, the emanations of an affectionate heart, zealous for the glory of God and the good of men. His temperament and manner are also calculated to make such appeals peculiarly unctuous and impressive. While speaking, his fame trembles or quivers as if with the force of internal emotion, as if his feelings were struggling to form themselves into words, and these words eager to make their way to the hearers. Yet there is no confusion, and very seldom any hesitancy. He reads the Scriptures with great calmness, neatness, and propriety, while in prayer there is a full flow of reverential feeling, which draws the thoughts of the hearers not upon him who speaks, but to the great Being who is then addressed. We may say we have seldom listened to prayers so satisfactory, and so entirely free of the earthly and carnal, as the opening prayers of both parts of the day. His discourses are, as we have said, more practical than theoretical or speculative, and better calculated to draw men by the cords of love than by the power of terror—better fitted to invite by their benignity and unassuming affection than to allure by dazzling imagery or startling disclosures. He seems to be devoid of combativeness, and this is a faculty as often displayed in the pulpit as in the market-place. Some preachers would be entirely out of their element unless there were Atheists, or Papists, or Socialists, or Sabbath-breakers, against whom to direct their thunder. They seem to be ill at ease unless there be a rocket in the air, or at least a jawbone, actively at work, to smite their enemies hip and thigh. Such consider themselves preachers of peace, but they love to be fighting for it. We do not intend to say that our preacher lacks nerve to attack transgressors or to defend his own views, but he seem

to be one who would love the ministry all the better if there were no foes to contend with—to impart consolation to the afflicted, encouragement to the timid, and to speak of the love and mercy of Christ, and the joys of heaven, to fellow Christians.

The subject of our sketch is rather under the ordinary stature, of a rather pale complexion, and full forehead. Though of active temperament, his appearance indicates that little of his time is taken up in recreation among the fields. His voice is sonorous and firm, and he speaks with energy. Mr Thomson's ministrations are not limited to the pulpit. His exertions to impart knowledge to the young, by means of Sabbath schools, and his assiduous attentions at the bedside of the afflicted, even when they are stricken with the most contagious and dangerous maladies, have endeared him not only to his own people but also to all parties in the neighbourhood.

During the period of his ministry the congregation has, from time to time, suffered severely, in consequence of the fluctuation in trade in the Vale of Leven and frequent depressions throughout the adjoining county; nevertheless the people have, on various occasions, exerted themselves nobly. They have ever most faithfully done their duty; and still, though in the midst of much opposition, and contending against many difficulties, they are the nucleus of a good country congregation. They have Sabbath classes, which meet under the superintendence of the minister; also, a missionary society in connection with the church.

Mr Thomson's father was the late Rev. Thomas Thomson, minister of the Relief Church, James's Place, Edinburgh. Mr Thomson was born and educated in Edinburgh. He studied at the University, and at the Relief Theological Hall, Paisley, under the late respected professor, Dr Thomson. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Relief Presbytery of Edinburgh, in May, 1837; and early in the commencement of the following year received the call to become minister of the above church, over which he was ordained by the Relief Presbytery of Paisley.

R E V. W. L A N D E L L S,

CUPAR-FIFE.

ABOUT ten miles west of the far-famed St Andrew's, and on the left bank of the water of Eden, stands a very beautiful and imposing town known as the capital of Fife. The town unites in its appearance the ancient and the modern. With its earlier history are associated the chiefs of the family of Macduff and their once-famous castle, and the convent they founded for the Black Friars. These erections the hand of time long ago levelled, and their site is known by the unpretending name of Castlehill. In 1555, the verdant esplanade in front of the castle was appropriated for the performance of David Lindsay's Satire of the Three Estates. That witty drama was levelled chiefly at the clergy of a superstitious faith who then nestled in that locality, and it had no small share in bringing about the revolution in men's religious sentiments which soon after followed. The author of that work lived about four miles north-west from Cupar, and a monument to the memory of the Earl of Hopetoun occupies the site which should have been occupied with a memorial of that distinguished poet. But though no monumental stone preserves the memory of the bard there are in Cupar living memorials of the faith which his works contributed to introduce and perpetuate. Instead of a host of Dominicans or Black Friars we have the advocates of the faith of prophets and apostles. Among the clergymen of that town the subject of our sketch, though among the youngest, occupies deservedly a popular place. Though not quite three years have elapsed since his ordination, and though the full stamp of manhood is scarcely on his brow, and though he found the ecclesiastical section with which he is connected

comparatively few, his fame, as a preacher, has already extended more widely than Fife. Even in our city his visits already secure large audiences, who listen with rapture and delight to his ministrations.

Last Sabbath forenoon, in East Regent Street Chapel (Rev. J. Taylor's), after very long introductory services, this preacher, at 12 minutes to 12 o'clock, gave out Luke xv. 3, as subject of discourse. (The passage is the parable of the lost sheep.) He commenced to say,

In illustrating a parable the first thing to be observed is its scope and design. The 7th verse of this chapter, in connection with the circumstances in which Christ was at the time, reveals the design of this parable of the lost sheep. The design obviously is that God desires, and is pleased with, the conversion of sinners. In illustrating a parable it is not necessary to seek a spiritual meaning in its minuter details. These are often merely the drapery of the story, and are not meant to have their spiritual counterpart. This parable, like others, has suffered by attempts to find a meaning in its minuter incidents. Some have considered the lost sheep to refer directly to the publicans and sinners addressed, and the ninety-nine just persons the Pharisees—but such a mode of interpretation is self-destructive. The Saviour has a more general meaning in his view, as we shall see in our discussion. Let us, then, consider, 1st, The application of the different parts of the story; and, 2d, The important truths brought before us in these different parts. After illustrating these particulars at length he concluded:—There are three things which only can be mentioned. 1st, How intensely should we feel for unconverted men who seek death in the error of their way! We feel if one lose his sight, or his hearing, or even his property; but what are these to the loss of the soul! 2d, Let sinners learn how eagerly God desires their salvation; and, 3d, Believers ought to learn to sympathise with God, and to endeavour to reclaim the sinner from the error of his way. These ideas the preacher illustrated at considerable length.

The discourse was over at five minutes to one, having occupied sixty-six minutes. After the concluding services the congregation was dismissed at five minutes past one.

Those who have anything like a chronological conscience will be shocked to hear of a service, and that the first of three in one day, two full hours and five minutes long. Such a service is altogether out of the question, and puts one so much "out of sorts" as to render him unfit for anything reasonable for a whole week. But the writer of this sketch had not only to endure what is almost unendurable, a service of such unconscionable length, but the order of that service was almost equally objectionable. During the introductory services the people had to stand fully half an hour at one time. They first sung a hymn standing, and then stood while a prayer of nearly half an hour's length was offered. Bodily exercise, exceedingly profitless at all times in religion, and especially so in a summer day in an ill-ventilated house, was in this case a penance of no ordinary character. And then consider the words gravely sung in praise. Let the stoutest advocate of hymns in public worship try, if he can, to defend the 122d of the Collection sung in that place. Nearly every line of it is a palpable solecism. The prayer was good in sentiment, but faulty in arrangement—it looked like two prayers than one. After all the ordinary topics were gone through they were again repeated. The people were prayed into a devotional frame, and prayed out of it again. There were a few extravagant expressions in it. A petition was offered that the congregation "might talk to God as man talks to his fellow." That would even go beyond Moses, who spoke to God as one speaketh to a friend; but we fear those who attempt this familiarity are more remarkable for their ignorance than for their devotion. The Scriptures give no countenance to such approaches. If Moses is to be our model, it is when he puts his shoes off his feet, for the place is holy ground. We were also to receive the truth "in the love of it"—a common erroneous reading for receiving "the love of the truth." Almost every minister, young and old, misquotes that passage. Come we now to a more pleasant part of our sketch—the discourse. Though some, after such introductory services, may not have been in the most amiable or devotional mood possible, soon as the [preacher commenced he put every one into a better state of feeling. It was, taking it all and all, such a

discourse as is too seldom to be heard. It revealed the following characteristics of the preacher :—The attentive hearer could not but be struck with the clearness of thought throughout the entire discourse. The opening sentences gave a very lucid idea of the structure of parables, and of their correct interpretation. The preacher, broadly and boldly, drew the line between the emblematical and the decorative—the leading facts and the unessential particulars—the design of the parable and the historical details. The same lucidity marked his outline. With the hand of a master he first painted in bold relief the important characters which are introduced in his parable, and then proceeded to illustrate the truths the parable taught. It is specially to be observed that these two parts were, in their illustration, kept entirely free of each other. The same clearness of thought appeared in all his subdivisions. The simplest could follow the bearing of all he said, and the most philosophical could find no fault with his method. But, besides this clearness, we mark also the vigour of the speaker's mind. Clearness is in some few cases associated with feebleness. Some shallow waters are clear, though the great majority of such are muddy enough. In this case manly vigour was generally apparent. He drew his outline in a clear and bold manner, and his illustrations were drawn not from reading so much as from observation and reflection. The views he gave of man as lost—of the great Shepherd who came to save—of the Father who sent His Son into the world—were not only vigorous but expressed in nervous language. Nor was there any incongruity of thought or figure introduced. We marvelled how any one who could give out the 122d Hymn could steer so clear of the faults of that singular composition. He has a mind able to resist the influence of these incongruities of figure, but, to feeble minds, the singing of such hymns is fatal to correct taste.

Our preacher displayed good taste and judgment as well as clearness and force of mind. His style is formed after the most correct and classic models, and his thoughts are guided by a sound judgment. We have seldom heard so young a preacher so guarded in his statements of difficult subjects. He had occasion to allude to the purposes of God, to the freedom

of man and his accountability, and on all these topics he spoke with Scripture freedom and philosophical accuracy. He possesses, in a large measure, the graces of the orator. One of our most eloquent preachers insists that the first requisite of a speaker is long arms ! Though we scarcely admit this as a first qualification, when under proper management they may aid to give effect to delivery. In this case the gestures of the speaker were graceful and dignified. His voice is sweet, soft, and full of music, and, best of all, under a thorough control. He is one of the preachers who exert a **QUIET POWER**. His voice is never more than a loud whisper. There is no frantic straining of the voice and gesture, and yet his delivery arrests the attention of the educated and the uneducated, though, on the latter class, we fear his style of eloquence is in a great measure lost. There are those who never think a minister in earnest unless he is stamping and roaring, with eyes rolling and staring, and face bursting and whole body convulsed. Such will think our preacher a very dull subject in the pulpit. But those who can understand earnestness of thought and force of mind, expressed in neat, elegant, and lucid diction, will listen with rapture as he pours forth, in his own quiet, emphatic, and eloquent manner, that which has cost him *something*—much research and hard study.

Mr Landells has the eyes of many, and ought to have the eyes of more, turned towards him—and as they look they anticipate. The small body to which he belongs has now and then had in its ranks men of the greatest theological name. A Bunyan, a Macgowan, an Ingles, a Foster, a Hall, and a M'Lean, have graced their ranks, and a longing at present prevails for the appearance of some other star to guide the destinies of that body. We shall not say that the subject of our sketch is the coming man ; but we have no hesitation in saying that, health spared him, he may, if he choose, rise to honourable distinction. A congregation, in writing to the late Matthew Wilks for a minister, requested that a particularly superior man should be sent to them. Matthew, in his own easy way, wrote, that “ there were flesh and blood in the one he sent, and the residue of the Spirit was with the Lord.” Here there is more than flesh and blood—there are unquestionable talents and occasional indica-

tions of genius, and if progress and triumph do not mark his career many will be disappointed. He will either sit down quietly and easily as the captain of a small band, or he will *think*, and *read*, and *rise* to an eminence which will command general attention. Pity it is that many young men of talent lack ambition and enterprise. After a little probationary effort they sit down, and sleep, and die—and are forgotten. They can command the homage of their people, be lights to a very small part of the world, and, when they are “snuffed out,” no one, beyond a very small circle, knows or cares. Their talents are hidden, not under a bushel, but under a sounding-board. We cannot doubt but it will be otherwise with him to whom anticipations are turned. May he tread the lofty pathway of the men we have named.

Mr Landells was born in Eyemouth, and received the elements of education in that town; and, after a course of theological study, was ordained in 1846 in Cupar-Fife, a church which was long under the Rev. Mr Watson, now of Edinburgh. The church is one of the most influential in the Baptist connexion, and has been long distinguished for its efforts in every good work. Attempts have been already made to remove him from his present sphere, but we are not aware that he means to leave at present.

JUNE 9, 1849.

[Mr Landells has been removed to Manchester, where he labours with success.]

REV. JAMES HARPER, D.D.,

LEITH.

TH E O R Y and experiment have now given place to facts and results. Men have no patience with the indirect and tedious—they must have the nearest way to the useful or the ornamental. The time was when the cloistered monk commanded respect, under the impression that seclusion was favourable to research and discovery. Volumes, written on speculative philosophy, were read and pondered, but men found they grew no wiser, and they are now impatient, impetuous, and determined. They believe not the theorizer, they despise the dreamer. Among the remnants of an obsolete order of things is the theory that a man could teach others what he knew not himself. Men believed that a professor could teach the communicative art because he was a linguist or a philosopher. One who found he could not command attention as a speaker was appointed to teach others to speak, because he was deemed a very clever man, though no orator. It had just been as rational to appoint a mathematician to teach rhetoric, or a linguist to teach astronomy. The world has found out the fact “that he who drives fat oxen must himself be fat;” that he who would teach rhetoric must himself be an orator. The United Presbyterian Church seems well aware of this fact and acting on it is one of the causes which has conferred on that church its pulpit efficiency. The men who teach the rising ministry are themselves efficient ministers. They come not from musty shelves to teach others, but from a stirring, active, busy world. They are not ignorant of the past, but they live and move in the present. They kindle their fires by contact with warm affection, with active

piety, with burning zeal. Pre-eminently is this the case with him whose name heads these remarks. All the divinity professors of that body are pastors of large and influential congregations. Drs Brown, Lindsay, M'Michael, Eadie, and Harper, live in the affections of flourishing congregations, and have ample opportunity of learning the requisites for a successful discharge of the pastoral office. Those whom circumstances compel not to study the present manifestations of mind, of error, of science, and philosophy, are more likely to prepare their pupils for some past age than for the present; and those who fail to make an impression as speakers will fail in their efforts to aid others to be preachers. We have described the heavenly Brown in the pulpit and in the professorial chair—we have called attention to the studious, learned, and clever minister of Cambridge Street Church—we have described the sterling and unostentatious qualities of the pastor of Cathedral Street Church—and we have delineated the philosophical and argumentative powers of a M'Michael. It remains that we say something of their colleague in the Divinity Hall of the United Presbyterian Church, and the sequel will show that he well sustains the important offices he holds both as pastor and professor. Last Sabbath he preached in Shamrock Street United Presbyterian Church, on Isa. lviii. 13, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath," &c. The preacher said he

Would not at present enter on any abstract reasoning in defence of the Sabbath, but consider it as a question of fact. There are certain questions connected with the Sabbath about which there is no diversity of opinion. For instance, it is admitted that the rest of God after creation is the reason of the Sabbath. That the Sabbath has been observed ever since some are of opinion, but others think differently. That the rest of the Sabbath is founded on the example of Jehovah, after his six days' work, is one of the undisputed facts. Another fact is, that the Jews were solemnly enjoined to keep holy the Sabbath-day. It is equally clear that, at the dawn of Christianity, the disciples devoted the first day of the week for religious observances. The day they kept was, with propriety, termed the Lord's Day. We thus find at once that the institution of the Sabbath is as old as creation, and that it was

observed by Jews and Christians—that it was adapted for men in different ages and under different dispensations. The Sabbath is hallowed by venerable associations, and is now observed in memory of Christ's resurrection till he come again. It is the bow that spans the whole heavens, and embraces in its circuit the successive generations of men. The conduct of those who despise it is not strongly enough expressed by the term *apathy*. We ought to give to God, not the day nominally, but all that is peculiar to it. There are those who talk of the Sabbath as obsolete, but let us view it as obligatory. It is the test of obedience. This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. The world says, "When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may buy and sell?" They murmur at it as a day lost. Viewing the Sabbath as a test of Christian obedience, we shall consider it, 1st, As a test of the spirit in which the business of the week has been conducted. God has laid down rules for the guidance of our whole conduct. He has shown thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of thee, &c. The law of God reaches all our transactions. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do it all to God's glory. There are many who cannot see what business has to do with religion. The blending of the two is deemed impossible. But every one has a reason and a rule—a motive and an aim in all he does—and the Christian should make God's will direct all his conduct. "As the eyes of a servant are to his master, so should our eyes wait on Jehovah." But the world acknowledges not God as law-giver. They deem His surveillance over their ordinary affairs as a sort of intrusion. The Sabbath comes with the authority of heaven, and demands a rest. No excuse of cupidity will be accepted, and those on whom it comes by surprise, and who are grieved at its approach, have reason to doubt their obedience to God's will. The force of the missile is seen by its rebound. The firmness of the root is known by the strength required to pluck it up. But, 2d, The Sabbath serves as a test of the spirit of obedience. There are certain duties so obviously founded on the relations which man bears to his Creator, and in the rectitude of the divine law, that as soon as they are stated their authority is felt—such as the fear of God

obedience to parents, and honesty in all our dealings. The things that are honest and lovely and of good report commend themselves to the reason of man and common sense. But there are other duties, known to be such only because God has commanded them. This is the old distribution of the moral and the positive. It is not meant, however, that the positive may be matters of indifference, much less that they may be wrong, and that it is God's will that makes them right. God enjoins things to be done which could not otherwise have been known as duty. But, 3d, The keeping of the Sabbath is a test of a man's relish for spiritual duties and enjoyments. 4th, Sabbath keeping is a test of the intelligence with which we seek the rest of heaven. These ideas were amply and beautifully illustrated.

The discourse, which occupied about three quarters of an hour, reveals the leading features of the able and influential preacher's mind. A strong vein of philosophical thought runs through the whole of it. Though the text was used as a motto, or rather as a statement of facts to be illustrated in the discourse, there was a strict unity preserved throughout. The Sabbath he considered as a test of Christian character—and a very intelligible test he made it appear. He ably showed that a regard for the Sabbath includes something more than the observance of a day—that it indicates the state of the heart, that it affects all our civil as well as all our sacred transactions, and that its bearings stretch beyond time, anticipating the everlasting Sabbath in the skies. The mind of the speaker is argumentative as well as clear and philosophical. He seldom assumes what should be proved, and seldom proves what should be assumed. On no subject has there been more ignorant dogmatizing than on the Sabbath. Thousands who have spoken and written of it make it appear more as their *own* particular Sabbath than the Sabbath of the Lord. To certain matters which they think transgressions of it they fix their little anathemas, and judge of the right and wrong independent of Scripture and fact. Not so is it with this preacher. He is quite aware of what is written in Scripture and in history regarding the Sabbath, of what stands regarding it as admitted facts, and what has been disputed, of what is work of

necessity on the part of a subordinate, and what on the part of those who subject others to Sabbath labour. But, above all, is he careful to show that Sabbath observance has to deal more with the spirit than with the letter, with the subject mind than with objective enactments. His sermon gives no details of what may be done, and what may not be done, but it was redolent with great principles—principles warranted by fact and arguments, by reason and revelation. It contained no soft sentimentalism about the Sabbath, but stern principles. No poetry was quoted on its benign aspect, but the keeping of it was shown to be connected with great reward, and to be indicative of the state of the heart. The language of the preacher is strong, lucid, and terse. He employs no circumlocution, but uses the direct and forcible. It partakes but little of the decorative, but is strictly philosophical ; and yet, while his arguments are almost as rigidly severe as a demonstration of Euclid, no one complains of his discourses as dry or uninteresting. Such is the excellence of his subjects—such the variety of his matter—such the intelligibleness and impressiveness of his statements, that, whether he ministers to his own people or to strangers, every auditor hangs on his lips. His manner is in excellent keeping with his matter. His voice is hard and strong, and his enunciation distinct and slow. He reads the Psalms particularly well, and the Scriptures not worse ; but, on the occasion in question, he adopted what we consider an objectionable mode of so interspersing remarks with the text as to puzzle one not familiar with the Bible to know what is God's word from what is man's word. We have strong reasons against this mode of interpolating Scripture. The Catholic translation of the Bible is in general good, but it is so marred with notes as to destroy its meaning. Now we hold that in every church the Scriptures should be read as they stand in the sacred volume ; and if the preacher will make remarks, let him first finish his reading, and then give his commentary. On this occasion the remarks (on Matthew xii.) were particularly pertinent. The only objection was to the timing of them. People should be allowed an opportunity of forming their own ideas of Scripture ; but if their teacher intersperses his own remarks, freedom of thought is gone, and they must think as

he says. Besides, the correct reading of the Scriptures has always been a most important part of worship, and has been considered so by Jews and Christians ; and if reading is turned into a running commentary it ceases to be reading. We are the more particular on this point, as the subject of our present sketch has under his care the training of the clergymen of the section of the church to which he belongs, and of which he is unquestionably one of the ablest ministers. If his pupils follow his example, then in that church we shall, by and by, cease to have the Scriptures read at all—a loss which none would deplore more than himself. We could, in his own particular case, almost allow an exception, were not exceptions in some danger of becoming the general rule. In such a case as this, a case in which the mind is so richly stored with divine truth and with sound theology, the evils of mixed reading are greatly mitigated ; but it is expected that in this, as in other matters, he is a model to his pupils ; and many of them, in attempting to imitate the master, are in more danger of “darkening counsel by words without knowledge” than by throwing additional *light* on that which is itself emphatically light. This may become an illustration of the folly of holding up a candle to let people see the sun.

Our preacher's pulpit appearances are excellent models of propriety. He puts on no clerical airs, but occupies himself with his work. His prayers are truly savoury, and give expression to the deepest yearnings of the human soul. During singing he keeps the Psalm book in his hand and joins devoutly in the exercise. In preaching he stands erect, and indicates the earnestness of his mind by significant gesture. The manner of the preacher is also particularly emphatic. He places such force on certain words that a new and full meaning appears where none appeared before. He is evidently a man utterly free from all ostentation, and one who cares very little for man's judgment, because he whom he owns as Judge is the Lord. It is said that in the earlier part of his ministry he was so impressed with the magnitude of the work of the pastoral office that he had thoughts of relinquishing it. Such were the earlier views of the man who has lived to occupy with honour one of the highest posts in the influential church

of which he is a minister and professor. What a contrast with the juvenile conceit too often seen in the pulpit as well as in the pew! conceit not followed with honour, but defeat. We doubt whether the United Presbyterian Church has a professor more efficient than Dr Harper. Without pretence, without ostentation, he conveys to the minds and hearts of the students lessons which they never can forget. He is well instructed in the various branches of theological literature, which come under his department, and he has ready access to the minds and to the affections of the pupils. They find in him no imperious master, no dogmatizing theologian, no austere and distant teacher, but a friend and counsellor, one on whose judgment they can rely, on whose kindness they can count, and in whose piety they can place implicit confidence.

Mr Harper possesses altogether a masculine mind, capable of exploring the heights and depths of any department of study. As a matter of course he is thoroughly versed in theology, for he could not be superficial on any subject to which he chose to turn his attention. It has been said that great heights are hazardous to weak heads; but he can calmly overlook precipices which would make hundreds of his brethren giddy, and cause them to totter and fall. Pretty and fine-spun sentiments are as foreign to his mind as birds of paradise are to Caledonia. While power is his first characteristic, proportion and symmetry are always apparent in his effusions, which make them as pleasing to the imagination as they are satisfactory to the judgment. Great heroes are represented as accomplishing their achievements without the visible manifestation of effort or great exertion, and this is in a high degree characteristic of our preacher. Ere he utters a word the bearer, from his outward aspect, expects much; and when he commences to give forth his full and vigorous tones of voice, expectations are confirmed, and the ease and dignity with which he accomplishes his task completely satisfy all of his claims to more than ordinary respect.

He appears to be somewhat above the ordinary stature, about 50 years of age, and apparently of sound and vigorous constitution. His brow is large—almost entirely divested of its natural covering—and the expression pleasing, and indicative

of decision, though not what could be regarded as stern. His appearance is, in every sense, manly and dignified; and, while his physical aspect commands respect his demeanour and disposition increase it. On first seeing him with his back turned, he reminded us of another distinguished professor, Dr Wardlaw, only his locks are not yet so snowy.

The late Rev. Alexander Harper, for many years minister of the Secession Church in the town of Lanark, was the father of the subject of our sketch, in which place he was born. He (Dr H.) passed through his College course partly in Glasgow and partly at Edinburgh. He studied theology under Dr Lawson of Selkirk, professor to the Associate Synod, and was licensed in 1818. In the following year he was ordained minister of the Associate Congregation of North Leith, where he has been ever since.

In 1843 he was appointed, by the United Associate Synod, Professor of Pastoral Theology, and was transferred to the Systematic Chair on the death of Dr Balmer. He is greatly beloved both by his large congregation and by the students favoured by his instructions.

MARCH 4, 1851.

REV. R. H. STEVENSON,

ST GEORGE'S, EDINBURGH.

OUR national bard has given expression to a very prevalent idea in the following lines:—

" Still thou art blessed compared with me—
The present only toucheth thee."

Though the opinion embodied in the above is proverbial its accuracy is liable to question. Limitation to the present certainly prevents much pain, but it also prevents much pleasure. The largest amount of human happiness is derived from anticipation and reflection. Probably as creatures rise in the scale of intelligence they become proportionably less dependent on the passing, and more on the prospective and retrospective. Man's anticipations and reflections not only separate him from the inferior creation but they prove him possessed of loftier powers—a denizen of eternity more than of time. Even the anxieties of the future form no inconsiderable portion of human bliss. Every thoughtful parent feels his mind occupied with the futurity of his child. Will it escape the thousand shafts to which helpless infancy is exposed, or is it doomed to the tomb ere it be capable of lisping an imitative syllable?—Will it pass on to youth and manhood an object of secret satisfaction and joy to its parents, a prop and defence in declining years, or will it swell the number of the worthless, and bring a parent's head with shame and sorrow to the grave? Each succeeding stage has its own peculiar suggestions. At the first outgoing to school, and when the urchin has mastered the alphabet, the fond parent beholds in

the achievement the prototype of marvels yet to come, and nourishes the fond idea that his child will yet be great on the earth. As the child advances to man's estate his future career comes to be the subject of deep meditation to himself. He begins to dream dreams and see visions, and looks forward to honour and distinction among his fellows.

The interest increases in the higher walks of life. The ordination of a clergyman awakens a host of anticipations in his own mind and in that of others. And even when hope is cut off, and prospect and promise are blighted, by the cutting short of a brilliant career, the human mind finds matter for profitable reflection. If the stern messenger of death arrests him in the morning of his days, when he is just commencing a useful career, ere time had been given for the full development of his powers, all that study and training which had prepared him for instructing his people, and for performing labours of love among the living and the dying, are as nought—a career of usefulness blasted—spring changed into winter. Yet still more suggestive is that occasion when a congregation are assembled to hear a funeral sermon preached in the church, and from the pulpit where the deceased had for a long series of years proclaimed the message of eternal life, who had given his days to the duties of instruction, who had spoken the words of consolation at the bedside of the afflicted while the lamp of life flickered, or to weeping friends when the dead was about to be carried to the narrow house. On such an occasion cold must be the heart that does not weave all its finest sensibilities around the memory of the departed, and that feels not a peculiar reverence even for the place where his voice has been so often heard, but where it shall be heard no more. Such was the occasion on which the funeral discourse was delivered on the morning of Sabbath week, in the Barony Church. A large assemblage was present, many of whom were clad in the habiliments that usually indicate bereavement and sorrow. The eagerness manifested by hundreds who were not stated worshippers in the church to gain admittance indicated, at once the high esteem in which the late pastor was held in this city, and the anticipations formed of him who was to officiate on the occasion. At the usual hour he whose name stands at the

head of this sketch entered the pulpit. Praise and prayer having been engaged in, he read the 2d chapter of 1st Thessalonians, and after part of a Psalm had been sung he gave out, as text, Titus iii. 4—7, “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,” &c.

As the discourse has been published, or is about to be so, we deem an outline unnecessary.

The circumstance of the text being in accordance with an implied wish of the deceased, though it no doubt tended to enhance the interest and solemnity of the occasion, yet might not be so favourable for the preacher as if he had been more free to choose his own text. The text naturally led the preacher to dwell upon the great doctrines of Christianity, which, while they are the grounds of all Protestant faith, have caused much disputation and dissension throughout the churches. The preacher did not enter on the subject in a combative spirit; for though this is necessary at times it would have been altogether out of place on this occasion. His aim was to explain what was stated by the apostle, without reference to objections of any description, and he accomplished this in a calm and satisfactory manner. We may state that he holds no peculiar views on these subjects, but keeps implicitly by those generally received. Some preachers, though regarded as orthodox, in explaining these doctrines endeavour to narrow and contract the scheme of mercy so as to leave little hope for man, and, as a refuge, many fly to infidelity; but while he showed that man can have no claim to salvation by his own works, he held out cheering hope to all who embrace the gospel offers. He showed that God does not mock his creatures by opening up a way which it is impossible for them to pursue, and afterwards punish them for not accomplishing that which was impossible. To man's reason there are doubtless many perplexing points which he cannot unravel by any logical process, but still there is sufficient clearness to show man what his duty is. The discourse, which was read from the manuscript, was chaste and careful, and, though containing no remarkable or striking points, gave evidence of sober thought and a well-balanced and well-cultivated mind. Preachers there are who would have captivated the imagination and

moved the feelings of the audience to a greater extent, but high as expectations had been raised they were not disappointed. That part of the discourse which referred more particularly to the late pastor was not composed of a series of hackneyed and formal expressions appropriate to any occasion of a similar nature; they were evidently dictated by a mind that reverenced the talents and amiabilities and virtues of the departed, but not to such an extent as to be blind to his weaknesses. The only point that we considered questionable in point of taste was the reference made to the late secession from the Establishment. Had Dr Black acted differently on that occasion his conduct would have appeared to many less interested, and who might have, with equal propriety, characterised him as standing by the ark of God. We do not insinuate that he was in the slightest degree swayed by other than righteous motives in adhering to the Church, but, as the expression involved a mere party question, it would have been well to have omitted it on such an occasion. However, regarded as a whole, it was a just and worthy tribute to the memory of the deceased, and the application of the event was excellent. The preacher's manner is easy, without much energy or gesture. He commences in a low tone, which rapidly rises to a firm and distinct pitch, which is maintained throughout with but little inflection or variation. His voice is clear and sharp, and his pronunciation elegant and not strained to affectation. It struck us that the lower features of his countenance had considerable resemblance to Dr Candlish, though the upper region will scarcely bear comparison. He appears to be about the ordinary stature, is firm set, of pale complexion, and his well-formed brow is surrounded by a considerable mass of dark hair. As minister of St George's, Edinburgh, he succeeds names of no ordinary celebrity in the Church:—The Rev. Andrew Thomson, whose vigorous, and determined, and terrifying, appeals are fresh in the memory of many still living, whose career now forms part of national history, and will never be forgotten. Dr Candlish, though not such a Goliath in the pulpit, and who makes up for deficiency of power by skill and expertness, has had no secondary share in the ecclesiastical doings of his time. These names created an

interest it is to remember what will most easily be assimilated by human temperament. The aspect of our teacher, though he evidently bears the characteristics of the race, and the ambitions and aspirations of the nation, is not inspiring in stability nor commanding. While he has an overwhelming faculty to impress men "a few true souls now" he possesses a fair share of all the qualities which are the antagonists of society, and which are all too many. He induces calm, passive duty, and a indifference in his surroundings. His moral qualities are commendable in the best "Christian sense," and should still have added some degree of reverence and respect had he given us more vivid illustrations of himself and credit to his countrymen. While his sermons are clear they are not bold, nor masterful in bearing as well as in substance. He is certainly without personality, and consequently without being a magnetism.

The discourses of our teacher in order to be appreciated, must be listened to carefully, as it is the pronouncements or startling passages—the sharp and forcible pericula—such new and momentous statements—but their general effect which reveal their value. Auditors will continue внимательно their attention so as to listen to the more obscure expositions in sermons unless it happens to them happening at unusual circumstances, or novel occasions. It seems however need not resort to St George's, Edinburgh. But those who can follow a train of thought—a train of argumentation—a series of facts illustrative of some great principle, will find there what will strengthen their minds and better their hearts. There may be fewer "landmarks" in the discourses than some would wish, but that is compensated for by appropriate and philosophical illustrations.

We understand Mr Stevenson is a native of Kincardine. He was ordained in 1844, and was transferred from Comrie to Edinburgh at the Disruption, where he has laboured with acceptance. We learn that about the time of his removal to Edinburgh he received a number of calls.

R E V. M R W I L S O N,

DUNDER.

THOUGH it is expressly understood that this series of sketches shall be altogether unsectarian the writers are by no means indifferent regarding diversities of doctrine held by different classes of clergymen. They cannot conceal from themselves the fact that the gospel is effective only in proportion as its leading doctrines are fully declared. Much less danger is to be apprehended from super-Calvinism than from the more popular forms of Arminianism and Pelagianism. It is a question whether the preaching of downright Fatalism is as disastrous in its effects as is the preaching of those who are perpetually harping on man's ability to save himself. To preach in accordance with the spirit of Christianity is to preach Christ; but those who give man credit for the whole or part of his salvation preach another gospel than Paul's. The preaching which does permanent good is that which humbles the sinner and exalts the Saviour—which describes the disease of humanity in all its dread virulence and danger, and Christ in all the exceeding richness of his grace and love. Though it for a time flatters human vanity to tell it that it is not so bad as certain preachers would make it, and that, after all, man may save himself, or at least have a considerable hand in it, such teaching is followed only with disastrous consequences. Those who preach one or two facts and doctrines may get credit for great simplicity, and being marvellously clear; but some waters are clear because they are shallow—and some things appear to the uninitiated to be simple, which, to the more experienced, are complex and absurd. If the Free Church preachers are mis-

taken in their zeal for a pure Calvinism, the mistake is probably the safest that can be committed. Just in proportion as they preach the utter worthlessness of man, and magnify the richness of free grace, are they laying the foundation of their Church deep and broad, and preparing themselves and successors for more extensive usefulness. Among those who preach the doctrines of the apostles with great pathos, power, and sublimity, the subject of our sketch holds a high position, as the outline of the following discourse will show. Last Sabbath he preached in St John's Free Church of this city, on Ps. lxviii. 18—"Thou hast ascended on high : thou hast led captivity captive." He said,

These words were spoken in reference to Jesus Christ. They refer to his ascent and victory. The Psalm in which they are found contains a description of a triumphal procession similar to that which honoured warriors of old. The inhabitants of a city are looking out as a victor returns from the successful battle-field, bearing with him the trophies of his victory. Their hearts are thrilling with joy. It is no partial success which they celebrate. In the completeness of the conquest they find their own safety. They anticipate from the victory prosperity and peace. The whole of this Psalm is a magnificent triumphal ode. The subject of it is "God manifest in the flesh." In the outset he is encouraged to enter on his great undertaking by promises, and in the close a high ascription of praise is conceded to him. His terrible power against his enemies is described. The subjects of the text are the fact and the circumstances of the ascent. But this ascent implies a preceding history. "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he first descended?" Jesus is not now, for the first time, visiting the lofty regions in the skies. He is no stranger there. He is merely returning to his everlasting home. He is one who went forth to conquest, and he returns bearing proofs of his success. It is by weakness God overcomes power. This Conqueror went forth in weakness and feebleness. No armies of the skies went with him to the battle-field. He went forth unarmed and alone. The first glimpse angels got of him after he left heaven was in a stable, and there they saw him a helpless infant. In

wonder they told the dwellers on earth that this was their Lord. The stars in their course pointed to the mysterious Babe, and directed the footsteps of the wise men to Bethlehem. Satan, the king of the enemy's country, heard the tidings and stirred himself up to destroy Jesus. When He went into the temple, the services of which prefigured his coming, he had few friends even there. The first soldiers he enlisted were an old man and an aged prophetess, both past the usual span of mortality. His enemies were many, active, and powerful, and combined to destroy him even when he was in the cradle. His first act was not very promising—he flees to Egypt, and we hear little more of him for many years. When he returns he is still friendless and unattended—without a home! There is now a revealed purpose about him; the plan of warfare begins to be divulged. He goes to Jordan and is baptised—he indicates that he is to conquer by a new method. He is to enter into the prison where the captives he is to redeem are held. That prison is unassailable from without. No instruments of war can destroy its munitions without destroying its inmates. He solicits admission into the prison, and himself becomes a prisoner. Yet he submits not to the prison-keeper. He is closed into that prison by the righteousness of Jehovah, and voluntarily becomes a captive, and submits to the whole law. The prisoners are all doomed to die, and Jesus also consents to lay down his life.—We cannot find room for the residue of this very eloquent discourse.

In the afternoon he preached on the clause following the text—"Thou hast received gifts for men." Our space precludes even an outline.

The forenoon discourse occupied an hour. It was delivered from carefully-prepared notes, and the matter was so condensed that the task to abridge it farther was a difficult, if not impossible, task. As intimated in our introductory remarks the preacher is not one who heals the hurt of the people slightly—he takes profound and philosophical views of salvation, and of man's state as a rebel against God. Many who have preached from this text have made it the motto for a rhapsody on Christ's ascension, and have taught nothing from it but the gorgeousness of the ascent to heaven. Our preacher, more philosophi-

cally, first viewed at length the descent which made the ascent possible ; and he traced that descent into all its lowest depths. As we know nothing of things absolutely, but only relatively, we can understand the grandeur of the ascent only when we consider the extent of the previous descent. This the preacher pourtrayed with great force. He traced the Saviour from his home in the skies down to the stable—down to the prison and dungeon in which men were held—down to the dust of death—and then exhibited him rising and ascending on high. Every one must have been struck with the very able manner in which the subject of our sketch handled this discourse. He seized it with a firm grasp, and gave proof, at every step of his progress, that he possessed great mental strength as well as logical acumen. Few sermons give such a view of the philosophy of the plan of redemption. The text is a part of a sublime ode, and most preachers satisfy themselves with saying a few pretty and poetical things from such texts ; but in this case philosophy was very properly made the basis of the poetical. All true poetry is full of the profoundest philosophy ; and all good sermons which discuss the poetical parts of Scripture must exhibit the same features. The preacher not merely stated the various steps of Christ's humiliation and exaltation but he all along connected his subjective work with man's state, and showed the fitness of that work to meet man's wants. Probably the most striking part of his discourse was where he assigned man his true position as dependent on God. He stated that no one but Satan ever promised man independence, and that man's liberty and glory, in their best and fullest extent, consist in submission to the divine will. After assigning to man his place as a captive to grace Christ's triumphs, he presented a view of Christ's ascension, which was sufficient to satisfy every one with the position of His captives. He looked on Jesus as a king—on the captive as his bride—and drew a picture which was at one beautiful, tender, and sublime. We do not often hear the Song of Solomon treated in a very satisfactory manner, but certainly the way it was quoted on this occasion was unexceptionable.

From what we have seen of this preacher, we should suppose strength and vigour of mind, chasteness and vividness of fancy,

correct and penetrating understanding, a firm and dauntless independence, to be his leading characteristics. Soon as one hears his hard, firm, strong voice, the impression is that the speaker is one of stern mould. His prayers deepen this impression. They are quite removed from the usual official routine, and bear unmistakeable marks of the heart and mind of the speaker. The prominent brow, the sharp, penetrating eye, the compressed mouth, all tell significantly of the inner man. Though his prayers are sufficient proof that he could speak—and speak correctly—without notes, he very properly preaches from them. We do not say that such a discourse could be delivered *memoriter*, but we do say that the man who could usually produce such a discourse without notes would be no ordinary one. There was a completeness about the outline, a lucidity in the order, a neatness in the expression, a force and finish about the oratory, that few minds can reach without the aid of the eye. But the chief excellence of the discourse was the great views it gave of God and man, and the way of salvation. The abstract and abstruse stood forth in palpable forms. Man's state, as a transgressor, was revealed in intelligible and palpable analogies, and yet analogies that seemed facts. The world was turned into a great prison-house—the Saviour was seen walking in that prison speaking words of comfort to the prisoners. He is at last crucified, and the evil and good influences at work in this event receive such an impressiveness and palpableness that every one must see them. Man is seen in all his helplessness and hopelessness, and the grace and glory of Christ are revealed and magnified. All this is done with an air and manner which declare a master in Israel. He falters not when he discusses perplexing metaphysical difficulties—he is calm when he is most rhetorical and delivering sentences of fire, which are felt glowing in every heart.

He scrutinizes with “eagle eye” a subject in its minutest lineaments and bearings, and presents them to the hearer with a vigour and boldness of no common order. He is not satisfied with the enunciation of a general principle, nor with a partial view of a subject, but traces it most perseveringly through all its ramifications, and does not let it escape its grasp till it be

thoroughly sifted. We know not whether he has devoted any considerable portion of his time to literary pursuits, but there can be no doubt that he would make an excellent critical writer. His sentences are short, strong, and comprehensive, and all of them give evidence of study—they are the essence of trains of thought. He offers nothing at random, but whatever is suggested by the heart passes through the head, to be purged and purified by the judgment before it be uttered in public.

In appearance Mr Wilson is about forty years of age. He reveals a well-developed cranium which is bereft of nearly all its natural covering. He is of the middle size and habit, and his countenance indicates firmness, energy, decision, and even sternness. He has a large and ardently attached congregation in Dundee, and their liberal collections indicate their liberality.

According to the Edinburgh Almanac he was ordained in 1837. Last year his congregation raised above £1000 for religious purposes, if the Clerical Almanac is to be trusted.

MAY 31, 1851.

REV. ANDREW MORTON,

GREENOCK.

THE requisites which give to public speakers a name are numerous and varied. The popularity of some clergymen has little connection with their pulpit appearances. They are liked because they are "so frank," "so generous," "so benevolent," "so active." Others are admired because of their pulpit manner. They acquit themselves "so cleverly"—they are "so much the gentleman." If we judge from a recent example in our own city, some are liked for their sweet voices, their graceful intonations, their clever turning to the east, &c. Of course the admirers of such things as those specified have no proper idea of the real work of the ministry. They "go up to the house of God," but not to be taught. All they expect is a little momentary gratification. The preacher is to them a "very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument, for they hear the words but do them not." There are other and higher qualities which have a much better claim to respect. The preacher ought to be more than a voice—he ought to be "a burning and a shining light." Intellectual, moral, and spiritual worth are the only qualifications that entitle to homage. Mental power, however, when dissociated from lighter qualities, will not command much attention. John Foster's career is the best possible illustration of this fact. In the various congregations on which he experimented, there were found some half-dozen who could appreciate his stern thoughts, and others gradually disappeared. The majority still care very little about his writings. They are vastly too intellectual for

this sentimental age. Some are popular for their moral worth, for their stern integrity, their unbending rectitude, their open-handed benevolence, their unaffected kindness, their faithful friendship. The power of others is almost entirely spiritual. Their conversation is in heaven—their discourses have a rich unction—a savour of divine truth ever emanates from them. Others, like the subject of our present remarks, are popular because of a rare combination of talents and excellencies—a combination which embraces a large share of the gifts of nature, and the accomplishments of the scholar. Such are scarcely more divines than they are poets, philosophers, and orators. These command more than love in word—they live in the minds and hearts of their people. As they speak the hearers believe and do. Any one can see the different aspect of a congregation who “*like* their minister” merely because he is a clever, an agreeable, or a learned man, and a congregation who love their minister because he speaks to their hearts and makes his influence be felt in their conduct. In the former case listlessness, apathy, carelessness, sit on every countenance; in the latter case the eye and the ear are fixed—the tear occasionally falls—the sigh is involuntarily heaved—joy and gladness play on the countenance. Among this last class of preachers and people are the minister and congregation of Sir Michael Street church, Greenock. The preacher, as the sequel will show, is loved because of substantial qualities. Last Sabbath he preached in Shamrock Street United Presbyterian Church from Matthew xxviii. 6, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” The preacher commenced by saying,

It had been often remarked that women were the last at the cross and first at the sepulchre. The doctrines of the gospel are fitted to exercise the most masculine minds, and yet it is to be observed that women appreciated Christ’s character more than the other sex. The most peaceful hours of his life are associated with Mary and Martha. Women ministered to him of their substance. It was a woman who wiped Christ’s feet with her hair. It was a woman who broke the alabaster box and poured it on his head. The prophet anticipated that it would be thus when he said, “Tell the daughter of Sion that thy King cometh, lowly,” &c. God was pleased to perfect

praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. As women attended him through life they were not absent in the hour and power of darkness. They followed him as he went to Calvary bearing his cross, and he turned round and addressed them—"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves," &c. When he hung on the cross they still lingered near. In the darkness that group of strangers did not retire, they remained till they saw the body of Christ taken down from the cross and laid in the sepulchre—and they saw how the body of Jesus was laid in the tomb ; and at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, they were found at the grave. Strange morning this for women to be out alone. There had been a great earthquake during the night, and the angel of the Lord had descended. In the grey light of morning these women found their way to the grave. The pious visitants at this early hour were women, and, with their sensibilities, it was no wonder they were terrified at what they saw, till the angel reassured them by thus addressing them, "Fear not ye, I know ye seek Jesus, come, step forward, see the place where the Lord lay." Persuaded that the audience here this morning desire to seek Jesus who was crucified, I wish to lead you in contemplation to the side of the Saviour's empty grave, and show you the place where he lay, and attempt to draw comfort and confidence from the survey. 1st, Come, behold the extent of the Lord's condescension ; 2d, Come, behold the certainty of his resurrection. These ideas he beautifully illustrated. 3d, Come, behold the crowning proof that our redemption has been ratified as complete. God hath raised up his Son, and exalted him, to give repentance and remission of sins. Had Christ not risen the Jews would have justified themselves, and maintained that Jesus was an impostor. But his rising declared the completion of redemption. The angel opens the grave, and Christ comes forth to a world waiting for him. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, for God hath exalted him, and given him a name above every name ! 4th, Come and see the triumph achieved over the powers of darkness, and death, and the grave. Because he lives his people shall live also. "Christ the first fruits, then afterwards those who are Christ's at his coming." The friends

whom we tended in their last struggles shall rise again. The motto should be written on every tombstone, and on the grave-clothes—it should be the heraldry of the living and the dead—"Death is swallowed up in victory." Now the thunder rolls, and the tempest screams, without awakening any echo among the sleepers of the tomb; but they will yet come forth. This world is dying. Death does its work in the palace and the cottage—all is dying. Men are only allowed to rise up and look around them for a little, and then hide themselves beneath the clods. Every moment is an exhaustion of strength. Were we not blind, we would see a funeral pall descending on us, and on all terrestrial things. All on the earth is going to rottenness and death. But the earth and all its works shall be burnt up, but not till after a current of life shall have passed through every tomb, and every scattered atom and every loved form will be reanimated. "This mortal shall put on immortality, and then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Brethren, let us rejoice in that salvation. Let us have all the joy which it is calculated to impart. Christ is risen, and we shall rise with him and live for ever. He ever liveth, and because he lives we shall live also. Blessed be the Lord our God, for ever and ever. Amen, and amen.

The discourse occupied about forty minutes, and the entire service about an hour and twenty-five minutes. We wish to mention this particularly, because many preachers seem to have adopted the notion that they will receive a favourable hearing on account of their "much speaking." We have not given a fuller outline of the discourse than is our wont; and yet this forty minutes discourse appears as long as those which occupy nearly double that time. We have in this discourse an additional proof of our axiom, that our best preachers preach short sermons; and that thinking and speaking, as regards time, are often found in the inverse ratio. Those preachers who think little speak much; and those who study hard can give the results of their thoughts in few words. And it must be specially mentioned, in connection with this, that the discourse is not a cold, mathematical outline—not a problem stated in measured phraseology, but it is instinct with life presented in warm

colouring. It is addressed to the affections as well as to the intellect—to the fancy as well as to the calm judgment. The discourse was full of beautiful pictures, but not fancy pictures. Some of the pictures were highly-finished portraits, and some of them fine historical paintings. The introduction contained a beautiful illustration of a striking thought. The thought was that the character of Jesus, though it affords a theme for the contemplation of the highest intellect, was appreciated best by females. The illustration was just a group of fine pictures. In Jesus' peaceful hours he was associated with Martha and Mary. He was represented with Mary anointing his head, and with Mary washing his feet. Females were seen following as Jesus went to Calvary, and waiting in a group as he hung on the cross. They were seen following the body to the tomb, and watching how it was laid. They were seen, at early dawn, at the sepulchre, in conversation with the angel. Affection was seen mastering every other feeling. The natural timidity of the sex, increased by the horrors of a public execution—by the unnatural darkness—by the rending earth and opening graves—yielded to spiritual and ardent love, and they hastened, in the early dawn, to the grave where Jesus lay. These particulars were stated by the preacher in the most impressive form. They were like a moving panorama, and the gaze of every auditor was fixed. The preacher then led his audience to the side of the Saviour's empty grave, and directed them to suitable contemplations. The first idea suggested was the condescension of Jesus; and the illustration of that particular was complete, both as regards fact, argument, and appeal. The second thought—the certainty of Christ's resurrection—was scarcely less ably elucidated. In illustrating his other particulars the preacher seemed somewhat embarrassed; but still there were passages of transcendent beauty, and the peroration was very effective.

This preacher, though but recently ordained, has excited great attention wherever he has preached; and the reasons are not in the least mysterious. In the first place he possesses great calmness and self-possession. His stout compact frame seems no inapt emblem of the inner man. While philosophy sits on his prominent brow, poetry is seen in his every feature.

When he begins to speak his voice is as sweet as an ~~English~~ harp, and yet swells out into the full organ sound. A sweeter, fuller voice can scarcely be conceived of; and then it is completely under control. His manner and voice would, of themselves, secure many attentive listeners; but he is more than a voice. His power is not more in his manner than in his matter. His thoughts are philosophical and poetical. He states facts not coldly but emphatically, and presents them in warm colours. As we have said he paints with the hand of a master, and his images are exceedingly beautiful and attractive, and his ardent, earnest matter, gives additional effect to whatever he says.

Men of poetical temperament are by no means rare; but poetical temperament in combination with intellect sufficiently strong, and a judgment sufficiently sound, to prevent the incubations of such from being made up only of commonplace sentiment and borrowed iterations, is rare indeed, and we have no hesitation in classing the subject of this sketch with the few. He contemplates objects not only with feeling but he has imagination to discover new relationships and ingenious and pleasing combinations, and he has force of mind equal to make his ideas bear directly on the conduct and judgment of his hearers. Nor does he choose to sigh and pipe in solitary places, making sonnets to purling brooks, and chaunting the requiem of favourite roses; he looks around with a manly eye, and with the perception of a philosopher, on the objects, pursuits, and tendencies of his fellow-beings. He feels himself called upon to act his part among the thinkers of the day, observing narrowly, weighing justly, counselling faithfully, and reproofing fearlessly. While his sermons are redolent of those sentiments that captivate and instruct man in moral duty, they are not wanting in the great principles of Christian belief. He is not one of those who think that Christianity is of such latitudinarian genius that its professors may believe anything, everything, or nothing, just as caprice or indifference may determine. Certain modern speculators have done much to disseminate the opinion, that if a person lives a peaceable life he may believe in Vishnu, Aliah, Juggernath, or any other fantastic and monstrous abstraction, and yet be certain of attaining that heaven which the Bible only unfolds,

and which its Author offers only to such as believe and obey in accordance with its injunctions. The Bible holds out no such hopes, and those who propagate such nostrums labour to annihilate Christianity altogether and make the word of God of no effect. Such views, we are happy to say, do not now obtain to such a degree as they did a few years ago, and while the church has such youthful labourers as him of whom we at present speak there is little cause to dread regarding the future.

Mr Morton belongs to Glasgow, and is about 30 years of age. He was called to several churches (among others that of the late Dr Heugh's) before settling in Greenock. His present charge numbers between 1000 and 1100 members. He has been placed only a year and a half, having been appointed assistant and successor to the late Rev. William Auld, who died on the evening of the day of his successor's induction.

MARCH 8, 1851.

REV. ALEXANDER HILL, D.D.**PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, GLASGOW COLLEGE.**

To over-estimate the importance of the office and duties of a professor of divinity is altogether impossible. Professors of secular science may, by incompetence and perverseness, retard the progress, and blast the temporal prospects, of their pupils, but a professor of divinity has constantly to deal with the spiritual and eternal. It is a fine idea (whether *materially* true or not) that the pebble flung carelessly into the lake causes vibrations which circle out till they reach the extremes of creation. What the pebble may be supposed to do is literally effected by the professor. Thoughts flung out in the divinity lecture-room are taken up and circulated till their consequences tell on the entire moral universe. Subordinate teachers may poison the streams of theology, but the divinity professor operates at its fountains. On his instructions depend, in great measure, the character of the ministrations of the church with which he is connected. From him may emanate an influence which will transform the rising ministry into "flames of fire" or an influence that will chill them into the images of death. The plastic mind of the youth necessarily receives, in a large measure, the impress of his. If he is dull and phlegmatic he sends forth a host of men to sing the lullaby of the church, which speedily goes to sleep; if he is energetic and enthusiastic, the Apocalyptic angel flies too feebly to emblem the fervour and power of their efforts. If such a professor hold the truth in unrighteousness he poisons the views of his pupils, and they, in their turn, poison the minds of their hearers; and if he be sound in the faith, his pupils,

generally speaking, will hold a form of sound words. Nothing can compensate for the lack of enthusiasm in a professor. He may be sound in his views—lucid in his style—logical in his arrangement, and unexceptionable in his system—but if there is no life, there is, after all, only bones, or what is called the osteology of divinity. If enthusiasm is beseeming in the business of time, how much more so in the business of eternity! Can an apology be found for dulness and dryness in the man whose themes are the being and perfection of God—the creation and preservation of worlds—the origin, character, and position of man—the relations of the moral universe—redemption from sin and the curse by the mediation and spirit of Christ—and the songs and sorrows of a hastening eternity? The first promulgators of these themes were charged with madness through excess of energy, but never with dulness. They *believed*, and believed *intensely*, and therefore so spoke that their hearers believed. It is admitted at all hands that the success of a gospel ministry in every age has in a great measure depended on the enthusiasm of the preachers. We have long held the idea that an unsuccessful preacher can scarcely be a successful professor. He may convey to his pupils a form of sound words, but that can be had in books. It is the voice and manner of the teacher that do the pupils good. In vain are they taught the acquisitive, if the communicative is neglected. Some of our greatest preachers were comparatively ignorant of systematic theology. Though few possess more mathematical minds than Dr Chalmers, in his most effective discourses there is a thorough disregard of dogmatic theology. Indeed, theology is so vast in its themes that attempts at classification and arrangement are in some danger of despoiling them of their heavenly proportions and reducing them to the measure of men.

Last Sabbath the subject of our sketch officiated in St Stephen's. In the forenoon he lectured on the parable of the ten virgins, Mat. xxi. 1—13; and in the afternoon on John xvii. 24—“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am,” &c.

Many will be anxious to know what are his distinctive views of the gospel; and few texts could have been selected which

would have proved, in their illustration, a better test of these views. The subjects necessarily led the preacher into the inner shrines of the sanctuary, where the utterances of the priests of God are awfully momentous. The sentiments of one holding such a position will be studied with interest, not only by those whose relatives and friends are studying the most sublime of all topics under him, but by all who tremble for the ark of God, whether they consider that ark in its place or among the Philistines. Additional interest gathers around his views on account of those of his deceased father, whose works live, and form the text-book of several divinity halls. We lately gave Dr Chalmers' opinion of Dr Hill's divinity, and that opinion certainly conveyed no very favourable impression of the evangelism of the views of that clear-headed divine. We, of course, do not propose anything so absurd as to judge the son's views by the father's; but all know the proneness of every son to imitate a father, and especially such a father. We had not, till now, any opportunity of forming an opinion of the views of the subject of our sketch, and it may be as well to relieve the mind of our reader by saying at once that, on hearing his first prayer on Sabbath last, we considered his views evangelical. After the forenoon lecture we were almost in doubts on some points; but after the afternoon service we were more than satisfied—we were delighted—delighted to think that the youth of the National Church were sitting at the feet of one who preaches Christ in all his offices and glory with such clearness, fluency, and power. An eminent old Christian used to say that he had "no fears of his preaching who could pray well." If the prayers are allowed to determine the preaching in this case, all is well. Dr Hill's prayers are remarkable for their simplicity, scripturalness, and earnestness. Instead of the old round of adoration he at once commences the practical, and treats with God as a sinner rather than as a complimenter. The prayers of some convey the impression that the petitioner is more anxious to give the idea that he thinks well of his Maker rather than any indication that he is anxious that his Maker should think well of him. They adore God as creator, preserver, governor, instead of applying to Him as the God of salvation. Dr Hill's

prayers gave the idea of a creature looking up to his Creator —of a sinner essaying to speak to a holy God—of a believer presenting his requests in the name of a Mediator. That his prayers were entirely free of form appears from the fact that they referred chiefly to passing events and to the particular circumstances of those assembled. The prayers after sermon were simple epitomes of the discourses, with a special reference to their application. The discourses present many attractive aspects. In his lecture he gave a pretty, historical explanation of the circumstances on which the parable was founded. He then showed the particulars of it were meant to apply to the church of Christ. The characters of the wise and foolish virgins were truthfully depicted, and the line of demarcation between the two classes boldly drawn. The only thing we thought omitted was a more definite explanation of the oil. He implied, indeed, that it was Christian principle, but said more of Christian practice. He said too little of the new man formed within, and much of the external conduct. The oil refers more to the subjective effects of the gospel on the mind than to its effects on the life. But if there was any omission in this respect in the first discourse it was amply compensated in the second. In it Christianity was taught in its connection with human feelings, affections, and intellect. The Saviour was preached as the mighty God and as the man Christ Jesus. With his disciples he appeared as on a high mountain, far removed from this world's turmoils, and on the verge of heaven. He who was about to be taken by wicked hands and crucified speaks and acts as God over all. Though about to be crowned with thorns he shows his disciples a halo of glory, a heavenly radiance already resting on his brow, and admits them to behold his glory, as, seated on his throne, he commands the homage of all heaven. On these sublime topics did our preacher discourse in a manner worthy of them. Never did he in thought or language fall below the sublimities of his subject, and he spoke at once with propriety, dignity, and enthusiasm. His style was elaborate, but cramped not his delivery. With great energy and emphasis did he present his mighty subject, and completely rivetted the attention of the audience. The unavoidable conviction of every auditor was that his soul was in his theme.

Seldom have we heard so complete a discourse so well delivered. Notes he had before him but they interfered not with the ease or grace of his delivery. We could have wished every divinity student in Glasgow to have been present. The sermon was savoury—luscious. Seldom, indeed, have we heard utterance so lucid, so rich—so full of the distinctive features of the gospel.

While the subject of our sketch possesses the clear-headedness and logical accuracy of his honoured father he infuses more life into his system. Under his plastic hand flesh comes upon the bones, and life enters. His sermons are more than a form of sound words—they are instinct with life, and breathe the spirit of Christianity. Many discourses, though they contain nothing wrong, and much that is right, are thoroughly pagan. Duties are taught, but Christian motive is omitted; God is presented, but not as in Christ; man is delineated, but as a creature rather than as a sinner; Christ is presented, but more as a teacher than as an atonement; more objectively than subjectively; more for contemplation than for reception. The future is presented more hypothetically than absolutely, and external conduct more enforced than a new creature. To all this the preaching above is a contrast. The views are all imbued with the distinctive features of the gospel, and while entirely free of merely natural religion they are equally free of the mystical. All are clear, but it is the clearness of evangelical truth; all are decided, but on the side of Christianity.

Dr Hill's appearance is attractive. In person he is tall and thin, and his features prominent and expressive. Gravity, sincerity, and amiableness, are strikingly expressed. His voice is strong, hard, and at times almost harsh, while at other times it is full and musical. His action is pleasant and graceful, and his entire pulpit appearance unexceptionable. He takes a marked interest in all the service. During singing he generally joins heartily. He does nothing formally or perfunctorily. He appears in earnest in every part of the service, and sustains well the interest of an audience. We do not call him a popular orator; but we call him a graceful and effective speaker. We say not that genius flashes as he speaks, but we say that the powers of a vigorous, well-balanced mind appear

in graceful action. We say not that he is what is called an original thinker, but we say that he possesses a larger share of common sense than belongs to most preachers.

Professor Hill is a native of St Andrew's, and was there educated. In 1806 he was licensed as a preacher of the Established Church, and afterwards spent some time in England. He was ordained minister of Colmonell in 1815, and was translated to Dailly in the following year. He was very much admired as a preacher in that and neighbouring parishes. When he preached at Girvan, all classes, churchmen and dissenters, flocked to hear him. In 1840 he was admitted Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, and has occupied that important sphere with much acceptance. He takes a deep interest in the movements of the Established Church, and his counsels and encouragements receive the most respectful attention. He also takes a lively interest in benevolent institutions, and is already favourably known on the platform at meetings of importance. He enjoys the respect and confidence of Christians of all denominations.

Dec. 15, 1849.

REV. WILLIAM SWAN,

(FORMERLY MISSIONARY, SIBERIA.)

SECRETARY OF CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF SCOTLAND.

THE adaptation of the gospel to men of all countries, and climes, and generations, has not been sufficiently urged in proof of its heavenly origin. The disciples of other faiths find that locality limits their operations, and ever-changing circumstances modify or render impracticable their maxims and precepts; but "the word of the Lord endureth for ever," and produces similar effects now to those which resulted from it thousands of years ago—similar results at the equator and the poles, on the burning plains of India, and on the icy mountains of Greenland. It is a great fact that the religion of Jesus is the only religion which has been heard of among all nations and had its disciples in all lands. A philosophical mind requires to look at such facts as the above to neutralise the objections which a superficial view of the state of the world has originated. By some it is deemed almost fatal to the claims of Christianity that it has made so little progress, and left three-fourths of the world pagan. The reflective mind, however, is satisfied if it finds that its features bear the stamp of the divine, even should its progress not be equal to that of human systems. These, like Jonah's gourd, grow up rapidly as in a night, and perish as rapidly; but God's ways are different. In carrying on his vast designs he often takes a long sweep, and moves slowly in man's estimation, because a small part of his ways are known. Christianity, destined to beautify and bless the world, has, for nearly two centuries, been laying its foundations deep

spreading its roots wide, and proceeding so as to secure permanency rather than passing show. Comparing it to a plant, its Divine founder has been, as it were, trying whether it will grow both in temperate and torrid zones; not to learn knowledge himself, but to teach others, and aid the faith, and hope, and effort, of his people. Disciples have been found among the crowded millions of China, among the degraded and sable sons of Africa, on the lovely islands of the Pacific, and the inhospitable wilds of Labrador—all to show the professors of Christianity, that Christianity, in its spirit, its precepts, and prospects is designed for *man*—for man as a fallen creature, whether in the form of a degraded downcast savage, or amid the glittering splendours of the richest emporiums of civilization. Not only is the spirit of Christianity adapted alike to all men, but the lessons of the Bible display the wisdom and knowledge of God. Few, indeed, are the figures, similes, and analogies it employs which are not intelligible to all men. Navigation and agriculture and merchandise are more or less known to all the nations of the earth, and chiefly from these are figures and analogies gathered to place before men the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. Our thoughts were turned into the above channel on hearing the subject of our present sketch delivering one of his instructive discourses last Sabbath. For many years he lived and preached among the mountains of Siberia—clothed in their perpetual snows, and among a population in a very primitive state, and enjoying very few of the blessings of civilization. When we heard him deliver that discourse he stood in the midst of a Scottish audience, where, around him, the Caucasian faces in their most intelligent forms were raised, and he preached to them the very truths which he had preached to the shivering population of Siberia, and found his way to the minds and hearts of both audiences. The text on the occasion referred to was Matthew v. 13, “Ye are the salt of the earth,” &c. (to the end of the verse); but our space cannot admit even an outline.

We have seldom heard a discourse possessed of such sterling excellencies less indebted to its delivery. But for its substantial merit it could scarcely have been tolerated, but its matter

amply compensated for the manner, and intelligent auditors derived from it a treat of no every-day description. The sound, and often profoundly philosophical, principles stated and evolved particularly struck us. The introductory remarks, though very brief, embodied a whole philosophical system on the origin of evil and the universality of human depravity. The preacher very properly stated that human depravity was one of the many self-evident principles which admit of no abstract proof. Facts pressing and potent fully establish it, or rather prove that depravity is a word which generalises and expresses universal experience. The outline of the discourse was neat and comprehensive, and the illustrations were appropriate and forcible. The force of the text depends in great measure on the figure it contains, and that figure was admirably treated. On the one hand, the preacher avoided that vague generality which altogether overlooks the distinctive features of the figure; and, on the other, he did not so slavishly adhere to it as to prevent the full practical treatment of it. Our readers will conclude that he who delivered such a discourse must be one of the most popular preachers of his time. That he ought to be so is obvious—that he is so is another question. Without possessing anything positively repulsive in his delivery—without either affectation or slovenliness, violence or absolute monotony—his manner is, to many, not attractive. He speaks in a soft husky voice, and articulates some of his words indistinctly and seemingly carelessly. He stands almost motionless, his features scarcely moving, and speaks the most terse and strong and true sentiments as if he were at a fire-side conversation. It is Vesuvius pouring out its burning lava, but that lava freezes at its mouth. It is the reverse of the mountain in labour—it is the production of mountains without struggle or effort. Were a natural orator to deliver such a sermon crowding thousands would rush to hear. We have not yet reached the period when sense will be preferred to sound—when men will swallow the ungilded pill—when savoury meat will be relished without the artificial accompaniments of the purveyor—when a burning and shining light will be preferred to a voice—when the man of mind will be preferred to the man of lungs—when vigorous thought will be

preferred to vigorous action—when gold will be recognised as gold without the “guinea stamp”—when the precious stones of thought will not be required to be set in glittering jewellery. In these days of ornament and of oratory—of sentimentality and excitement—of poetry run mad, and sermon-hearing a past-time—such a preacher as the subject of our sketch has a mission to perform of a most important character. If the million will not hear his voice they will have the benefit of his thoughts. These are, in the first instance, communicated to men of intelligence, and they give them out to the world, not improved, but popularized—not in their original compact form, but broken up and decorated and rendered palatable. He is a centre sun that commands the lesser orbs which roll around, while they in their turn command their surrounding satellites. Such a man at the centre of any system is of the highest advantage. His voice may not reach the masses, nor is it necessary. If the system is properly organised he moves the springs which may move the world. In such a position as that which he presently occupies—the secretary of a religious body (the Congregationalists)—his advice and control are all-important. He may not have so much to say as some of his more loquacious associates, but when he speaks sensible men will listen, and when he suggests active men will follow up his suggestions. He evidently possesses a sound and discriminating judgment—a shrewd and vigorous intellect—a well-balanced and well-informed mind. Instead of commonplaces he utters sayings philosophical, scientific, sensible, and sometimes oracular. There is comparatively little of the ornamental and showy about his mind—his thoughts are the thoughts of a mind well cultured—of a taste refined by reading and reflection. His style is that of one who has thought and written much, and who is familiar with the philosophy of language. Seldom can his style be condensed. He speaks as if afraid to waste words, and careful not to apply them improperly. His pronunciation is comparatively pure, and his enunciation distinct, though not sufficiently emphatic. To the furor of the orator he is an utter stranger. His voice seldom rises above the conversational, and sometimes falls almost below the audible. Had he studied the communicative as intensely as

he has studied the acquisitive there are few preachers of the day would have been so popular.

After a course of study in the academy at Glasgow, under Messrs Ewing and Wardlaw (having previously attended the University of Edinburgh), he went, in the service of the London Missionary Society, to Siberia. This was in 1818. He finally returned from Russia in 1841, the mission being then broken up by command of the emperor. The missionaries translated and printed the whole of the MSS. in the Mongolian language; but, during the latter years of the mission, the multiplication of converts and manifest success of the work awakened the jealousy and fear of the Greek Church, the dominant sect of Russia; and this led to the suppression of the mission. During his stay in Siberia he published two or three volumes connected with missions, and *Letters on Missions*—a work we have just read with satisfaction and pleasure. Since his return he has held the office of Secretary to the Congregational Union of Scotland, and has conducted the correspondence of that denomination with great propriety. He is often engaged in preaching on the Sabbath. He is brother-in-law to the much-esteemed pastor of Leith Congregational Church, the Rev. G. D. Cullen, a sketch of whom we hope to be able to offer our readers on an early day. Mr S. is much beloved by all who know him, for his many private virtues as well as for his public spirit.

JUNE 29, 1850.

REV. ALEXANDER M'LEOD,

STRATHAVEN.

THERE are certain material objects possessed of a native and inherent grandeur—a grandeur to which the ingenuity of man can add nothing. Our own native land possesses scenery which the highest genius can only describe, and compared with which the loftiest creations of fancy are tame and contemptible. If the lofty Benlomond and lofty Bennevis of our own land are not enough will not Mount Blanc and Peter Botte of other lands suffice? There are other places which events alone ennable. But for their being the scenes of memorable transactions they might never have been distinguished. The birth-places of our British poets and philosophers, generally speaking, were sufficiently obscure, but because in them there arose men of renown they assumed a proud position, and became the centres of a wide attraction. What were Palestine but for the scenes that there transpired? Abana and Pharpar are mightier streams than the Jordan, and yet Jordan is famed and they are scarcely known. The mountains of Palestine are of all mountains the most insignificant, and yet Carmel and Hermon and Zion are the most memorable hills on earth. As there are universal and national localities so also has every Christian spots enshrined in his fondest recollections. The man to whom his birth-place has not peculiar attractions is destitute of the best feelings of humanity. The man who has not his little "Mizar," from which he remembers God, is destitute of the best feeling of renewed nature. Though we deny being hero or local worshippers in any thing but a defensible sense, we still plead guilty to the attractions of

locality. The cradle of genius—the scenes of a martyr's sufferings and triumph—the academical chair, worthily filled—the pulpit, occupied by genius, and piety, and worth, command more than respect. We wait not till these places have the sanction of a hundred years—an hour confers on them an imperishable immortality. We shall make no secret of it that the pulpit of John Street United Presbyterian Church is one of our most sacred localities. Many would wish to preserve it as sacred as the holy of holies into which the high priest alone entered. Any ordinary man appears to us out of place when he occupies that sanctum. Though we proceeded to that church, on Sabbath last, with a considerable apprehension of "desecration" we found our apprehensions unfounded. The usual occupant was not there, but there was one of kindred spirit, as the sequel will show. After reading emphatically, and very admirably, the 27th chapter of the book of Genesis, he offered a few remarks on the respective characters of Jacob and Esau. These remarks indicated a mind of great shrewdness and comprehensiveness. The lecturer stated that the prevailing character of Jacob were perseverance and determination. He had an end in view, and would reach it honestly if he could, but, at all events, he would reach it. The character of Esau he described as that of a sensualist—now bartering his birthright and its blessings for a mess of pottage—now crying like a child for losing earthly good, and hating intensely the man who deprived him of it. Those remarks were followed by a very extraordinary prayer—a prayer definite and intelligible. Many confess sins which they never felt, and implore blessings they never desired. They confess more like mathematicians than moralists—they talk of the number and magnitude of their sins, but these sins seem to be as ideal as mathematical lines, and certainly much more indefinite. Those who declare their sins more in number than the sand on the sea shore could not name half-a-dozen nor even one sin they will acknowledge. On this occasion sin was not dealt out in this wholesale manner. The sins of heart and life were specified—not slumped—they were described, not guessed. Sins against God—against fellow-creatures, and against one's self, were revealed, and mercy earnestly implored. The

prayer struck us as one of the most definite and plain and practicable we have heard for many a day. The discourse for the occasion was founded on John vi. 12. The words are—“That nothing be lost.” Our space excludes an outline of the excellent discourse.

This discourse was remarkable for its unity of design. The doctrine or principle was the economy of the Divine administration, and though some of the illustrations might not have been very obvious to the casual and thoughtless hearer the “thinkers” could readily see the strict connection every part bore to the whole. Facts, very numerous and satisfactory, were adduced—anomalous exceptions were stated and removed, and at every step of his progress the preacher vindicated his principle and elucidated its importance. Next to the variety of the discourse its philosophical character deserves mention. We refer not to philosophy falsely so called, but to the philosophy of Christianity, or rather to the consonance of the principles of it with true philosophy. We say not but the preacher, whose facts are disjointed, disconcerted, and inappropriate, may do good. The facts of Christianity are of themselves able to save the soul; but, to thinking men, Christianity appears additionally satisfactory when its philosophical character is elucidated. Thousands of preachers could have preached domestic economy from the text—they could have shown carefulness to be a part of Christianity; but only the philosophical preacher would have found in the words a principle that applies to all the departments of the Divine administration, and a law specially palpable in the conduct of the affairs of our world. The preacher did not allow himself to be tempted into the fields of science in quest of illustrations, he very properly confined himself to the most familiar objects for the illustrations of the material, and to the Bible for illustrations of the moral world. The great danger of a mind like his is undue and dangerous speculation; and hence it was particularly pleasing to find him adhere so severely to the words of truth and soberness, and draw so largely from a source the most scientific and philosophical of all sources, and yet the least acknowledged by would-be philosophers—the word of the living God. But the discourse had higher claims than its

unity, its philosophy, and even its scripturalness. Unity has been observed when it was the unity of schism; philosophy has been observed while infidelity was preached; even the Scriptures have been fully quoted when error was defended. But in this case unity, philosophy, and Scripture were all subservient to the elucidation of a great principle—to the enforcement of true Christianity. The preacher's divinity is equal to his philosophy; his heart is as large as his intellect is clear. Unlike those whose philosophy is more specious than profound, who avoid redemption as a theme which their system embraces not, or as a phenomenon which their system repudiates, its facts are his principal phenomena and its spirit his guide. Instead of contradicting the phenomena of nature, or the discoveries of science, he finds that it is before them all as well as truer than all. He is not ignorant of the Emerson and Carlyle philosophy, and occasionally he employs their phraseology; but to all appearance he has, regarding it, employed the abjuration of Jacob in reference to another matter, "My soul, enter not thou into their secret; mine honour, in their assembly be not thou united." He acknowledges "the Lord from heaven" as the only true "representative man." Talk of morality! the true morality he teaches is love to the Lord Jesus Christ. The profoundest depths he explores are "the depths both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." The acquisition he chiefly boasts is the "knowledge of Christ." Towards this object all his studies and all his efforts tend. It is evident the preacher possesses a mind of superior character, and has vigour enough to make a way for himself through the wilderness of sects, opinions, philosophies, and creeds, without losing his course and without allowing himself to be allured from the written will of God. We may say of him, as he said of Paul, that "false philosophy has only served to make him more useful." He has evidently waded through transcendentalism, and, instead of being contaminated, finds himself all the more fitted to vindicate the ways of God to man. Where God has shrouded himself in darkness he dares not to penetrate, but reverently approaches the footstool by the path of reason and the light of revelation. Where God has said "Let there be night," certain philosophers of our time exclaim, "Let the darkness be divided,"

and, holding up some *ignis fatuus* of their brain, call on the universe to behold the sun in the midst of heaven. The curious wonder at it, and the blind exclaim that they see it, and give Goethe, or Emerson the glory; but the person of healthful mind will pass by these novelties, contented with the light and darkness that God has made, and conscious that more true light will appear when more is needful. Our preacher in this discourse said he wished to lead his hearers by certain pathways, and he did so, not as an amateur traveller by ways that had been trodden ten thousand times before, but by a way discovered by his own sagacity and research. If he be not altogether an intellectual Park or Bruce, at all events, as a Lander or a Stephens, he partakes largely of their vigour and not a little of their intrepidity.

The manner of the subject of our sketch, though possessed of some strong points, is not probably equal to his matter. Though he had his notes before him he seldom referred to them. We have frequently stated that there are certain preachers who ought never to use notes, and certain others who ought not to want them. Among this latter class we place this preacher. A mind like his sustains manifest injury by making such demands on the memory as *memorier* preaching requires. Though a tame and careless manner cannot be too much deprecated it is to be borne in mind that a manner may be too active and energetic, as well as tame. The manner ought to be in keeping with the matter, and with the disposition of the preacher. A man of mild and unassuming manner, thundering in the pulpit, is a very incongruous spectacle; and on the other hand, a man of active, ardent temperament would cut a sorry figure in the pulpit were his manner dull. Think of a Wardlaw and a Caird thundering, or a Candlish and a Brown dull, in the pulpit! While we would recommend the subject of our sketch to retain all his energy we think his gestures and voice would be improved were he to use his notes. He is in some danger at present of breaking and damaging a voice of great fulness and power. His whispers would be heard at the extremity of the largest place of worship, and yet he frequently forces and strains it. We are certain that the more intelligent of his audiences would

greatly prefer a calmer manner. It is all very well for men of small thoughts to express them with a voice of thunder; but the lightening does its work quietly. The mightiest agencies are the mildest—the feeblest the most noisy. The feeling of the attentive auditor, as he listens to this preacher, is that his great thoughts, couched as they are in elegant language, would produce a greater effect if they were allowed to quietly steal their way to the mind. Noise among the ignorant is desiderated; but we doubt whether for their sakes nature should be violated and the intelligent disappointed. He occasionally hesitates, but not because he wants thoughts. One who uses language so choice must be in difficulty in the selection of his terms; but he is evidently conscious he has the thoughts, if they would only shape themselves into proper language. The style of the preacher is vigorous, terse, and eloquent. It is the style of one who has thought and read, and, if we mistake not, written much. He frequently uses abstract terms, which convey a very emphatic and unmistakeable meaning. One of his distinctions unintentionally contained a grave satire. In speaking of the parties employed in aiding in working out the Divine purpose he arranged them into four classes—parents, teachers, ministers, and thinkers. The distinction between ministers and thinkers is, we suspect, more than verbal. Though we should be inclined to deny it in his case there are vastly too many to whom it applies. The preacher evidently meant to apply the term thinkers to authors and others who gave their thoughts to the world through the printer in contradistinction from the living voice.

The subject of our sketch, though born in the North Highlands, was brought up in Glasgow, and attended its University. After going through the usual theological training he was ordained as a clergyman in 1844. He has laboured in his present sphere with much acceptance, and his congregation comprises not a few of the most intelligent and worthy inhabitants of Strathaven. We have heard that he is an occasional contributor to periodical literature, but regarding this we have no certainty.

REV. WILLIAM SHAW, M.A.

AYR, (FORMERLY OF BONHILL).

THE inhabitants of the country, through familiarity with it, regard with comparative indifference those varied aspects of external nature which so powerfully arrest the attention, and awaken the sympathies of the occasional visitor. The transitions of the seasons are too gradual and imperceptible in their progress to make any striking impression on the every-day spectator. The vestiges of winter linger long amid the indications of spring—the genial sun-gleam alternates with the bitter sleet shower, and while the fields of the valley are spangled with daisies, winter may be seen blanching the mountain-tops. A similar fraternal relationship exists between spring and summer, summer and autumn, and autumn and winter, and thus the cycle is completed without any abrupt transition to excite peculiar emotion. Yet a country residence presents many fascinations, and the poetic or sentimental citizen is apt to imagine that were he only located in some rural spot, far removed from city bustle and din, where, instead of long ranges of houses and dusty streets, his eye should wander amid sunny fields, winding streams, and towering mountains, his days would glide on in uninterrupted enjoyment. But human nature has concomitants of a much more controlling influence than the aspect of the external world. Worldly cares, the iron grasp of misfortune, false friends, the wasted breath of envy, the insinuations of malignity, all will enter to goad, torture, and crush the spirit, and imbitter existence in the cottage on the hill-side, as well as in the street tenement. In the loveliest retreats appalling casualties will

occur, and there also will the finger of disease touch the current of life to cause the torture of anxiety and the pangs of separation. This was strikingly exemplified on Sabbath week in the locality where the subject of our sketch labours. External things presented an aspect of life and hope and gladness; but sadness and gloom overshadowed the hearts of men. A boat, containing a pleasure party, had been, on the previous evening, by no fault of any on board, cast away on the neighbouring lake, and the thought that four persons, but a few hours before in the flower of existence, in the vigour and buoyancy of youth and health, were sleeping the sleep of death beneath the waters completely neutralized all sympathy between the face of external nature and the feelings of the people. The event gave a melancholy pathos to the morning orisons of many a family, and that which ought naturally to have been a song of joy was changed into a hymn of sorrow. Much is being said by a certain class of would-be philosophers of the religion of nature in preference to that of the Bible; but such signal instances of the uncertain tenure of all human hopes and joys teach men that they stand in need of a surer evidence of an all-wise and all-good Disposer of Destiny than what can be gleaned from the visible creation. This event preached a practical sermon in regard to the necessity of revelation, and, no doubt, many repaired that morning to the house of God with minds more thoroughly impressed with the duty of attending to divine things than on ordinary occasions. The large congregation of the Established Church assembled about half-past 11 o'clock, and a few minutes afterwards the pastor, whose name is at the head of this sketch, entered the pulpit, and commenced the services of the day by reading, in a quiet, solemn, and effective manner, four verses of the 103d Psalm, commencing "Such pity as a father hath," &c. These having been sung by the congregation, the pastor, in the same calm and earnest manner offered a prayer remarkable for its devotional pathos and devout sentiment, in course of which he touchingly alluded to the event already alluded to. He then read the 1st chapter of the 1st Epistle of Peter, and, after other devotional exercises, gave out for text, Isa. xlivi. 2, 3, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they

shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." Our space excludes the discourse.

The discourse was sufficient to show that its author possesses a clear head, highly refined taste, and exquisite feeling. The subject was of a peculiarly pleasing nature to every Christian mind, and its consolatory and cheering spirit was not marred by any prominent course of negative illustration. We find many who, on similar subjects, by way of contrast, draw gloomy and dismal pictures of the condition and prospects of those who are not the people of God, but this preacher's taste and judgment are too matured to have recourse to such artifices. The spirit of the text was sustained throughout, and was developed and elucidated by a wide combination of facts derived from Scripture and human experience. Its special and emblematic bearings were shortly yet satisfactorily disposed of at the opening, and the principles or doctrines which it embodies afterwards discussed in due logical order. The discourse was at once simple in its structure, varied in its details, and chaste and elegant in its phraseology. There was no striving after effect, yet it was highly effective, and there was evidence of power without effort, and of scholarship without scholastic display. The doctrinal and the practical were happily blended, and occasionally the matter glowed, as it were, spontaneously into pure and brilliant coruscations of sentiment and feeling. The sheen of his discourses consists not of random flashes or scattered scintillations, but of broad palpitating gleams, which brighten by degrees and illuminate a wide expanse. While his matter is substantial, clear, and genial, his manner is entirely free from everything that savours of affectation or display. The same almost motionless attitude assumed during the devotional exercises, and the same subdued, distinct, and silvery tones are sustained throughout the delivery of the discourse. There is no rolling of the eyes, no outspreading of the arms, no rhetorical contortion, nor sudden transitions, but when approaching a climax his voice swells gradually, and a slight movement of the hand is the only inroad on the usual quiet-

cence. His manner altogether forms a striking contrast to that of one who, at a former period, was the stated occupant of the same pulpit—Dr Candlish. The latter was all motion, fervour, and anxiety, the former unexcited and tranquil ; the one was as a voice from the restless billows, the other influenced the heart like the animating and inspiring spirit of the summer calm. In reflecting on the entire exercises, we have the impression of a preacher that possesses much natural vigour of mind, chastened to severe propriety by thorough training, and who is imbued with a deep sense of the importance of his mission. There is no attempt at imitation, either in style or manner, of famed preachers, nor any straining after popularity. Were he more vociferous, more showy, more pompous, he might greatly extend his popularity among a certain class ; but he would not be more useful to those who have a desire to learn, nor more satisfactory to an audience of cultivated taste. Personally he is about the common stature, of spare habit, and apparently not of robust constitution. He seems to be still on the sunny side of thirty, and his pale countenance indicates that he has not attained to such intellectual maturity without much severe and protracted study. His features are regular, firm set, and a pair of sharp eyes sparkle beneath a well-formed, though not a peculiarly prominent, forehead. His soft fair locks indicate the nervous temperament, the influence of which may be detected in the amount of warm feeling which pervades his discourses, though not in the equanimity of his manner.

Mr Shaw was assistant and successor to the Rev. William Gregor—a man of much mental capability, who was widely famed among the masses for his shrewd and somewhat eccentric expressions, and among his brethren of the ministry for extensive erudition and keen critical acumen. At his death, a few years ago, the entire pastoral duties devolved on Mr Shaw, and he has discharged them in a manner that has gained him the esteem not only of his own congregation but of all parties in the neighbourhood.

Mr Shaw is a native of Perthshire, and commenced his studies in Edinburgh. In Dr Stevens' History of the High School of Edinburgh, Mr Shaw's name appears as the Greek medallist of 1837, and in the same year, besides other honours,

he gained in the Rector's class the first prizes for Latin verse, English verse, and English prose. This Latin prize poem was thought to be of such merit as to be printed at page 328 of that work, and the following notice is given of his subsequent career—"William Shaw, B.A. and M.A. At the University of Edinburgh Mr Shaw carried off the signet gold medal in the Senior Humanity Class in 1839, and, in 1840, the gold medal in the Moral Philosophy Class, decided by general excellence in essay writing. In 1843 he gained the gold medal given by the students of the University of Edinburgh for the best essay On the Moral Tendency of the Protestant Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. This prize, open to all students of theology that year, was decided by the *Senatus Academicus*." Mr Shaw finished his education under Dr Hill at the University of Glasgow. He was licensed to preach the Gospel in 1846, and in December of the same year a memorial in his favour, signed by 200 male heads of families, being addressed to the respected patron of the parish, Mr Campbell of Stonefield, he received the presentation to his present charge, to which he was in due time ordained. During Mr Shaw's incumbency there have been established a Sabbath-school, in which there are at present 18 teachers, and about 200 scholars on the books, a congregational library, containing 500 volumes, and a missionary association. Towards the close of last year he accepted a call from 750 parishioners of Ayr, to which parish he has just been translated, and where he commences his labours on the morrow.

MAY 17, 1851.

REV. SIMON MACKINTOSH, D.D.

ABERDEEN.

THE capital of the North has long occupied a very important ecclesiastical position. The disciples of a less pure faith than Protestantism long had their habitations there, and since their dispossession it has been the asylum of an earnest Christianity. Once on its cold northern shore the fires of a fierce and cruel persecution keenly burned—once in its prisons lay the saints and martyrs of Jesus. There, too, learning has long had its seat, and from its Universities have gone forth a host of men to enlighten various parts of the world. For a considerable time past it was one of the chief strongholds of the National faith. When dissent was making rapid progress in other places of Scotland it could scarcely exist in that city. Always loyal in other matters, the citizens seemed to consider a departure from the established faith as a virtual abandonment of the gospel. The Disruption, however, came, and in this place it turned the world upside down. Every one of the city clergymen left the National Church, and the people in thousands flocked around them. It was no longer deemed a crime to depart from the National faith. They who left were more numerous than they who remained, so that the tables were turned as regarded the matter of dissent. And yet the National faith has there its teachers and its people—teachers that proclaim the faith of the apostles, and people that give no unfaithful representation of an apostolic Christianity. The Disruption we hold to have been a decided advantage to ecclesiastics in Aberdeen. It divested the adherent of the National Church of that false superiority which numbers and influence led him to assume, while it removed from the man who refuses allegiance to the National faith the reproach of schism. We know no place better calculated to cherish a healthful and vigorous Christi-

anity than this city of the North. Everything around it wears the aspect of health, of energy, of permanence. Its streets and buildings are the sparkling granite—its shelter on the north is old ocean, lashing its white shining shores; over it is a sky clear as that over “eternal Rome,” whilst the strong, pure breezes whistle through its buildings, and impart health and vigour to the people. Let no one smile at the idea that locality has an influence on Christianity. We seek no far-fetched analogy when we state that the early disciples of Christ were found in the North of Judea, and the first missionaries of modern times were found in the North of Scotland. Both were considered rough and rude by the more refined dwellers of the south—but what is refinement without energy? and what is accomplishment without purpose? The mind is the man, and it needs no proof that soil and soul are allied, that the immaterial and immortal mind bears—and will for ever bear—the impress and characteristics of the place where it was cradled and taught—the place where those powers began to expand, which will for ever expand in the other world. Let any stranger visit the city of the North on a Sabbath day, and he must be struck with the spectacle. Towards gorgeous churches, built of glistening granite, crowds of persons proceed. Their dress indicates that they are dwellers in the city; but their clear healthful countenances tell of a city favoured beyond others. Instead of pallid faces every eye sparkles, every cheek is mantled with health. The fresh breeze has swept every pavement and avenue perfectly clean, and the iron pathways rebound with the firm step. Can the conclusion be other—What vigorous minds must look out at these piercing eyes!—what energy, what will, what purpose, what piety, must be sheltered in these healthful frames! We lately visited one of the city churches, and found there one of the largest and most respectable congregations to be seen in any part of Scotland. The minister of the parish, whose name heads these remarks, was officiating. On his first appearance we were somewhat in doubts of what we had to expect. A person wrapped in a huge gown, with a head seemingly little higher than his shoulders, made his way to the pulpit. On his sitting down but little of his face was visible. His brow was covered with dark

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the same time, the U.S. Government has been endeavoring to keep the country in a state of war, and to justify it in so doing, has been repeatedly asserted, that the Confederate States were in rebellion against the U.S. Government, and that they were not legitimate sovereigns.

the same time, the author has been compelled to make a number of changes in the original manuscript, and it is now in a condition which he believes to be more suitable for publication. The author wishes to thank the editor for his kind consideration of the manuscript, and for his valuable suggestions and criticisms. He also wishes to thank the publisher for his permission to publish the article.

He is the author of "The Life and Times of the Late Dr. John Brown," "The Slave's Appeal to the Free States," "The Slave's Appeal to the Free People of the United States," and "The Slave's Appeal to the Free Church of Scotland."

sition. We say *conscious*, in opposition to many very unfit persons who *think* they are in their proper sphere. While a mistaken *opinion* of one's own powers tends only to make one ridiculous, *conscious* fitness arms one with an immense advantage. On the one hand, such betrays none of that fitful uneasiness which a false position, despite the most consummate conceit, induces; and on the other, none of those pitiful displays which felt incapacity causes. Without anything approaching to affectation, on the one hand, or embarrassment, on the other, our preacher proceeds on the even tenor of his way, causing the attention of his audience to concentrate on his matter more than on his manner. Being comparatively free of mannerism he sustains attention by a uniform excellence of matter. Without any great effort he can produce what is worth attention, while by an effort he can bring forward what can bear comparison with the production of almost any preacher of the day, for energy of thought, elegance of style, and excellence of taste. Probably no preacher brings forward more varied and important information to his hearers. It has been remarked of many preachers that they are more apt to speak than they are apt to teach, but our preacher always teaches when he speaks. He communicates the greatest amount of knowledge in the fewest words, and, being a constant student, he weekly prepares "things new and old."

The subject of our sketch was born in the parish of Petty, near Inverness, in 1815. He was educated at the school of Ardserier, then famous under the late Mr Smith. He took the degree of A.M., and gained several prizes, especially the First Moral Philosophy, in 1835. He studied theology at Glasgow and Aberdeen, and was licensed in 1840. He was first settled in Inverness, and was removed from that back to Aberdeen in 1843. He had about 300 communicants at his first sacrament. There are now about 1500 members on the roll, and from 900 to 1000 communicating each half year.

He received the honorary degree of D.D. from King's College, Aberdeen, in 1848.

REV. N. M'MICHAEL, D.D.,

DUNFERMLINE.

A HIGHLY-GIFTED and vigorous mind resembles the impetuous river, whose course, though it is impossible to restrain, may be directed into another channel. Every attempt to arrest its progress is overcome by the force of its own current, and every temporary hindrance is swept away by the accumulated power which it brings to bear against it. In like manner a mind of strong natural parts will manifest its superiority. Circumstances may act upon it, giving direction to its powers, and moulding the future destiny of the individual, but no event, however untoward, can lull that mind into repose, or repress its bold and lofty aspirations. Under all circumstances it will show its superiority. In studying the history of great men the instructive fact is often pressed upon our notice, that adverse circumstances, so far from repressing the ardour of genius have only served to quicken its fire, and to fan it into flame. Nothing can afford a greater encouragement to merit struggling against the current of events, but resolute to rise to fame, than the history of our Arkwrights, our Simpsons, and our Huttons. These remarks are of some force in reference to the subject of our present sketch. Of the many destined to the pulpit not a few seem to abandon the pursuit after knowledge with their college and other academic classes. They obtain a pastorate in some retired sphere, where there are few inducements to literary labours beyond the ordinary duties of the pulpit; and yielding to the soporific temptations which their circumstances present, they settle down into a state of hopeless mental indolence. The temptations incident to such

circumstances, a mind of energy and power alone can successfully resist and overcome. To this class belongs Dr M'Michael, who, though he has ministered for the last fifteen years in a sphere not strictly of a rural character, yet presenting few external stimuli to mental exertion, has, prompted chiefly by his own active and vigorous mind, dug deep into the treasures of theological literature, and gained an honourable place and reputation, not merely in the body to which he belongs, but in the Christian church at large. He gave early indications of possessing superior talents. At college, the appearance which he made in all the classes was respectable, and in some brilliant. In proof of the latter assertion, we may refer to the fact that he was the successful competitor, in the mathematical class, for the £50 prize given by the late Sir Robert Peel during his rectorship of Glasgow University—a prize which was keenly contested and honourably won. His taste seemed to lie towards mathematical and other abstruse branches of study which he cultivated with great assiduity, and in a mind thus disciplined in early life, was laid the foundation of his subsequent eminence and usefulness. Shortly after completing his preparatory course of study, and receiving license to preach, he was invited by the Relief Church in Dunfermline, to become helper and successor to the Rev. Henry Fergus. Having accepted the invitation, he was ordained in 1835.

He was also a frequent contributor to our periodical literature, and for some time was the principal conductor of the Christian Journal, with which he was more or less connected until the union of the Relief and Secession bodies rendered its existence as a denominational organ no longer necessary. He was, at the earnest solicitation of his brethren, induced to accept the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in the Relief Divinity Hall—an appointment which he had held for several years before the union already referred to, and in this important sphere so highly were his labours appreciated generally, that after the union his services in the professorship were retained for the same department. Of his labours as a professor we cannot speak too highly. His mental endowments, his habits and tastes, combine to eminently fit him for the onerous and responsible duties of the professorial chair, and

especially for that particular department which has been assigned him.

As a preacher, Dr M'Michael possesses many excellencies. His mental character and varied attainments eminently fit him for that description of pulpit exercises called "lecturing," excellence in which is a more difficult and rare acquisition than excellence in sermonising. It implies a more acute intellect, a more profound scholarship, a deeper research, and a more accurate and extensive knowledge of the sacred volume. His expositions of Scripture, when fully prepared, are quite a treat. They abound in vigorous thought, correct critical remark, and sound exegesis, interspersed with appropriate practical observations. His style is vigorous and terse, but comparatively destitute of the embellishments of fancy. The imaginative faculty has not come in for its due share of culture. He evidently studies the matter rather than the manner; strength of thought rather than elegance of diction; cogency of argument rather than ornament of dress. Metaphor and simile, and the other figures of speech essential to an orator, are seldom employed; hence his language is not always equal to his thoughts; bold and lofty conceptions are frequently expressed in plain and commonplace terms; the gems of truth are placed before you, but they want brilliancy and polish; there are often "thoughts that breathe" less frequently than "words that burn."

In the pulpit Dr M'Michael's appearance is noble and commanding. Though yet young, he looks advanced in years. The midnight oil has stamped upon him the emblems of premature old age. Already the snows of winter have gathered thick around his brow. These locks, recently of a glossy jet, now transformed into a silvery grey, imparting to his intellectual countenance a venerable air, and the lustre of his dark eye, conveying a vividness of expression, arrest the attention of the hearer, and prepossess him in favour of the preacher. His manner, though of late years greatly improved, is not altogether unexceptionable. There is a good natural voice, no lack of energy, with an impressive earnestness of delivery, and yet his best sentences sometimes fall powerless upon his auditory. The chief defects are an occasional indistinctness of articulation, arising from a thickness or rapidity of utterance, which

renders it difficult to distinguish the words expressed, and a frequent misplacing of emphasis, which tends to obscure the sense. Were these defects obviated, together with a slight tendency to monotony, his delivery would be good, and such as might serve for a model to the rising ministry under his charge. The use of notes, which he has recently adopted, has done much to remedy the defects in question, and we doubt not, may yet by care and perseverance, remove them altogether. We believe that nothing but a defective manner, together with an inornate style, has stood in the way of that popularity as a preacher which his talents and acquirements would lead us to have anticipated. But to those who know him, and especially to his own flock, his more solid qualifications have commanded a measure of respect and affection which few enjoy.

It will readily be inferred, from our previous observations, that Dr M'Michael is none of those narrow-minded, scrupulous men whose sympathies and benevolent exertions are circumscribed by denominational boundary lines. He has a large heart and a liberal mind, and hence a helping hand for every work which contemplates the well-being of the human family. While none compromise less their own distinctive principles, no man better exemplifies the ancient maxim of philanthropy, "I am a man, and whatever concerns mankind concerns me." He is the warm and unflinching advocate of civil and religious liberty, and has aimed a powerful blow or two at the fetters with which the Church is shackled by the State. In every benevolent enterprise his countenance and co-operation are almost invariably solicited, and as readily obtained. He has thus, in the town of his residence, gained the respect and esteem of a large portion of the community of all religious denominations. His talents and acquirements have recently been rewarded by the honorary distinction of Doctor in Divinity—a degree conferred upon him in February last, by the Senatus Academicus of St Andrew's University. Dr M'Michael is a native of Kilmarnock.

August 17, 1850.

REV. ROBERT SCOTT.

GLASGOW.

In no feature of our city has the hand of improvement and taste been so manifested of late as in our churches. The plain exterior has given place to fretted arches, ornamented columns, and elaborate ornamentation, and in every direction graceful spires shoot upwards, like stony fingers, directing the spectator heavenwards. Formerly this latter feature exclusively belonged to the Establishment; now this party distinction has, like many others, disappeared, and churchman and dissenter are at liberty to build where and how they please, without let or hindrance. In an architectural point of view St George's-in-the-Fields is far outshone by hosts of churches in the city; but it has one peculiarity which gives it an appearance more inviting than any other. As its name denotes it is carpetted around by the verdant sward, and its clean white walls are agreeably relieved by masses of foliage. There is nothing whatever of a Glasgow character about it, though black, dingy walls and streets approach it on all sides. It looks like a piece of decent, healthful, and fresh-lunged country, newly brought in from the rural districts of Stirlingshire or Perthshire. Even at this season of the year, when the chilly blasts of winter have stript the forest of its garments, and blighted the verdure of the fields, this little spot has a calm, sober, substantial Society-of-Friends aspect which is more than usually captivating. The interior of the church presents a corresponding degree of unostentatious substantiality, and those who have been the stated occupants of its pulpit have been men more substantial than showy—among whom were Dr Napier, now of the College

Church, and Mr Stewart, now of Moffat. Its present incumbent, the subject of this sketch, is a young man, but commencing, as it were, his ministerial career; and from the appearance of the congregation, and the attention given to his discourses, he seems to be already popular. On Sabbath week, at the usual hour, he entered the pulpit, and after devotional exercises had been engaged in, he read the 148th Psalm. After praise he announced for text, James iv. 8, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." Our space excludes the discourse.

The subject of our sketch has a deep, firm voice, which he generally modulates in accordance with the theme on which he expatiates with comparatively exact propriety. He has also the advantage of a prepossessing exterior, without that haughty bearing which is often found united with a well-favoured person. He is tall, rather spare, of a pale complexion, prominent, well-formed, and regular features, and a massy supply of dark locks. Though youthful in appearance there are also the indications of more days and nights being spent with books than in sociality or out-door recreation. One so young must have comparatively limited experience, and what standing he may yet attain in the Church it would be rash to predict. Though some seem to have reached their zenith at the very outset of their career, long and judicious application is the general road to permanent excellency. Our preacher possesses many requisites for a successful preacher. He has a good voice and appearance, great command of language, much feeling, and an extensive knowledge of general literature. His acquaintance with the Bible is apparent in the frequency and appropriateness of his quotations; but he is apt to trust too much to the intelligence of his hearers, allowing philosophy to yield to sentiment and logical demonstration to sink amid a mass of somewhat indiscriminate illustration.

The discourses of our preacher are highly creditable as first efforts, and, by attention and study, eminence will be reached. His mind possesses not a little vigour, and his fancy is vivid and fervid. If he sinks down into scholastic, stereotyped thought and phraseology he will be much to blame. With proper care he may not only maintain the balance of powers which at present characterise his mind, but he may strengthen

and harmonise them all to a still greater extent. Some, in his position, turn all their attention to the cultivation of imagination, which, as a matter of course, in that case, becomes sufficiently wild and romantic ; and others, again, cultivate the sterner faculties, till their style becomes dry and their sermons unsightly skeletons. Should the youthful minister of St George's-in-the-Fields attend to the several departments—the intellectual and imaginative—the argumentative and descriptive—he is on the certain way to popular fame as a pulpit orator. Of course it is to be understood that the communicative department will also have a due share of attention. A manner so easy may become, by study, very fascinating. Both voice and gesture are capable of reaching still higher degrees of excellence. Should he, like many, cease to think, and read, and reflect, he may settle down satisfied with a tame mediocrity.

Mr Scott was born in Cadder Parish, in the neighbourhood of Kirkintilloch. He studied in Glasgow, and was licensed, to preach the Gospel by the Glasgow Presbytery in January, 1849. He was ordained minister in St George's-in-the-Fields at the beginning of last May, that church having become vacant by the translation of the Rev. Mr Dill to the parish of Colmonell.

NOVEMBER 30, 1850.

REV. JOHN CAIRNS, A.M.,

BERWICK.

"THE pleasures of hope" rise above the loftiest descriptions and sweetest songs. Were the contest relating to the comparative claims of faith, hope, and love limited to this world a strong case might be made out in favour of hope. But for its dominion a residence on earth would be intolerable—man would become a fury, and the reign of terror and despair would be complete. "Hope's blest dominion" benignly embraces all classes. It lits the infant eye to look for the maternal smile—it nerves the arm of youth for the most Herculean tasks—it lives in the closing eye of the dying man—it dissipates the gloom of the silent grave. Its triumphs are most complete in the Christian's career, as he has hopes as well as joys with which others cannot intermeddle. It enables childhood to look beyond an earthly parent's smile—it inspires youth with energy for the contest with spiritual foes—and it gives songs in the darkest and dreariest hours. At times this hope rests in the soul unseen, and unknown to all unless its possessor—at other times it gets vent and bursts forth in the most impassioned and transporting ecstacies. Probably on no occasion does it shine with a steadier lustre than on the evening of a communion Sabbath. The rightly-exercised mind has shared richly in Zion's provision. Every grace has been called into lively exercise, and the Christian has been abundantly satisfied with the good of God's house. On returning to that house in the evening everything has an unusually attractive aspect. The mind feels peace—peace with the universe—and an ardent desire that others may share the happiness enjoyed. On such occasions the close

of the Seventy-second Psalm is generally very properly selected as subject of praise, and is sung with an energy and earnestness unequalled on other occasions. Last Sabbath evening it was not only sung in Renfield Street United Presbyterian Church, but the subject of our present notice announced it for text, and aided his audience to understand more fully words which had often cheered their hearts and which finely give expression to their best feelings. On this occasion the text, as we have said, was Psalm lxxii. 17—"His name shall endure for ever." Our space excludes his discourse.

The philosophy of the discourse was its most prominent attribute. The preacher attended to what is but too generally neglected—the adaptation of the provisions of the gospel to man's nature as well as to man's wants. The preacher has evidently studied human nature with success. He has considered both the springs of human action and what sets them in motion. He is evidently familiar with the history of the world, and has studied society in its many phases and aspects. He makes to bear with great effect his knowledge of the human soul, and of the state of the world, on all his illustrations of divine truth. He is evidently a patient and energetic inquirer. He is not satisfied with mere facts—he must know their origin, character, and results. He is not likely to believe any thing merely because it is strongly asserted; he must ascertain its truth by analysis, comparison, and analogy, and if he find it not in unison with similar or relative facts he receives it not. He embodied a vast amount of learning and research in a few words. Often a single sentence contained the result of much patient investigation. Besides the importance of his facts, the manner of stating them was peculiarly attractive. His mind is highly poetical. He not only fully investigates the subject, he kindles on every subject poetic fires, so that they sparkle and blaze as if encompassed in an atmosphere of glory. Before such a preacher the infidel with his questionings has no chance. Would he put down Christianity with facts, our preacher adduces stronger facts in its favour—would he philosophise, he philosophises too—and, in the wide sweep of his philosophy, he engulfs and destroys the insulated ideas of the enemies of truth. But while his thoughts are ex-

ceedingly beautiful—his arguments unexceptionable—his logic irresistible—his diction very chaste and elegant—he is less popular than he ought. In regard to the article of enunciation he is often at fault. His monosyllables he often draws out to an unconscionable length. We observed, for instance, the words "man," "been," "king," "seen," &c., frequently protracted to nearly double their proper length. The same thing is true also of certain syllables in polysyllabic words. His voice is soft, but not disagreeable, were it under more perfect control, but unless when he warms with his subject it is sometimes at fault. His gestures, too, though sufficiently animated, are not always natural. We observed, for instance, when he was speaking of uniting or combining things he made his hands separate when they should have met. He studies well what he has to say, and would he just study how he is to say it half as well, his popularity would be unbounded. That he has a mind of the very finest mould admits of no dispute; that he has a taste the most fastidious and severe is equally apparent; that he has a memory ready, retentive, and strong, is obvious from the fact that he can deliver without notes the most difficult and closely-reasoned discourse. It only remains that he should acquire the graces of the orator, and he will speedily occupy the place as a preacher to which his rare gifts significantly point.

It is well known that when he was a student at the University of Edinburgh he had no rivals as a successful student, and that he carried off the highest honours of that University. He is one of the most successful contributors to the highest class of periodical literature. The pages of the North British Review and of the British Quarterly are enriched by his pen. Those who know him best speak in the highest terms of his personal excellencies. Amiability, transparency of character, stern uprightness, and single-mindedness are stamped on all he says and does. An article in the North British Review on Professor Müller's famous work on Sin shows that Mr Cairns is well versed in the German theology, and that he has threaded his way through all the mazes of Neology without letting go his hold of Scripture and reason. The article in question shows that the writer has studied the works of these German theologians in their own language, and that he is well

versant with the various and conflicting forms of error which there abound. The view he takes of sin and human depravity in the article is highly satisfactory, and is defended with very singular ability. While he gives Professor Müller credit for power and piety as a writer he takes the liberty of thinking for himself, and of following him no farther than he holds, what he conceives to be, the truth. The article reveals the philosopher and thinker as well as the scholar. The writer of it is evidently one of a strong and bold mind, not afraid to push its investigations into the profoundest depths of science and into the still more bewildering mazes of metaphysical and theological error. He finds no difficulty in reconciling all mental and moral phenomena with the teachings of the Bible, and that without reducing them one iota from their imperative declarations of man's total ruin by the fall, and his recovery by the atonement, grace, and spirit of Christ. That Scotland has men able to follow these indefatigable and acute geniuses through all their devious paths, and hold out to them a more excellent way, is matter of devout gratitude.

Mr Cairns was born at or near Douglas, Berwickshire. Immediately after he was licensed by the U. P. Presbytery of Edinburgh he received a call from his present congregation, vacant by the death of his venerable predecessor, Dr Balmer. He was ordained in 1845, and has laboured in Berwick since with much success. He is greatly beloved as a preacher, and he exerts a wide influence in the fine town where he ministers.

NOVEMBER 2, 1860.

OUR SCOTTISH CLERGY.

Opinions of the Press.

FROM THE EDITOR OF THE "CHRISTIAN WITNESS."

"Viewing them as a whole, they are incomparably the best thing of the kind that has yet appeared on either side of the Tweed, indeed the only thing of the sort really worthy of the subject; the three volumes of *Onesimus*, which appeared some thirty years ago, were all that could be expected from the author, although they were but rubbish. Now for *Sketches of Our Scottish Clergy*, which exhibit very unusual merit, they are strongly marked by that which must ever form the ground of all true criticism---vigorous common sense; and hence arises that fascination which bears the reader forward in a very pleasing manner. Seldom has he the smallest disposition to dispute points with his teacher. The intercourse resembles that of refined, high-toned company, in which the stream of conversation flows rapidly and strongly, and yet without the slightest ingredient of controversial harshness. Again, the theology is remarkable for its luminousness and soundness. There is, moreover, a generous strewing of the whole with principles both rhetorical, ethical, and literary, which cannot fail to be very useful, both to the present and the coming age. Again, the sketches, as a whole, are marked by a keen sense of propriety, which has not been sparing of its favours when they were required. Propriety---pulpit propriety---is a quality which, in pastors, can scarcely be overvalued, and yet a quality in which some worthy men are greatly wanting. There are few pulpit evils of magnitude that have not been specified and exposed in some of these Sketches. Never was the subject of chronology turned so ingeniously and successfully to practical account. The proportion of the several parts of a public service has been excellently and profitably discussed, and cannot fail to be generally useful. The writer's notions of lecturing and preaching seem quite correct, and both exceedingly just; and, as such, are adapted to profit the parties immediately concerned, and also all those of whom they may severally be considered the types. How far the critic is capable of exemplifying his own precepts I know not, but sure I am, had he lived

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in another age, he would have occupied a respectable place in the school of Quintillian or Longinus. He is largely endowed with the spirit of just criticism, and his gifts have not been neglected. I have observed that he has no stock either of stereotyped phrases or images; he takes each case *par se*, and deals with it according to its qualities and circumstances, and hence he shows no sign of exhaustion. If by various hands, and there seems such a hint, if I remember right, in one place, then the mystery is solved, and the rare merit must not be ascribed to an individual. Lastly, but not least, the sketches seem distinguished by a goodly measure of integrity, which the men of Glasgow will not fail to appreciate. I have observed, with satisfaction, that the greatest and the least are treated with proper freedom. Such are the general impressions made upon my mind by the series; I confidently predict for them great popularity both in Scotland and England."

FROM "KITTO'S JOURNAL OF SACRED LITERATURE."

"The relation of the pulpit to our modern intellectual and social state--the causes of its wanting influence, confessed by impartial parties on all hands--the measures of influence exerted by the press, especially, among those causes: whether, in existing circumstances, its influence is capable of being restored, and if so, by what means, are questions of great and immediate importance; questions which publications like the present are adapted to suggest, and which we should have liked to have taken up in connection with the volume before us, as we feel that at the present hour they much demand to be revolved and discussed. But of this for the present neither our time nor our space admit. On one main point, however, and in reference to a recent practical discussion of one branch of the subject, we agree with a writer in one of our best popular periodicals, that in order to its greater efficiency there is one thing which the Christian ministry wants in our time fully as much as increased zeal, adaptation: general adaptation to the prevailing intellectual, moral and social character of the times, and adaptation in individual instances to local circumstances and exigencies. In inquiries such as we are here indicating, a book like that before us is of considerable value, as it discusses the intellectual, moral, and other qualifications of a great number of clergymen of different communions; at the same time that an epitome of their ordinary ministrations on some particular day is usually presented to the reader. The sketches are generally executed with ability; and though it is only of a few that we can speak from personal acquaintance with the subjects of them, respecting these few we bear our willing testimony that they are characterised by prevailing fidelity as well as graphic power. Then the sketches are executed in a kindly spirit, excellencies being dwelt on rather than defects."

FROM THE "NORTH BRITISH DAILY MAIL."

"This goodly and well-got-up volume contains no less than fifty-

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two sketches, biographical, theological, and critical, of clergymen of all denominations, principally belonging to Glasgow and Edinburgh. The design of the publication is to furnish data for a correct estimate being formed of the present state of the Scottish pulpit; and it has been worked out with no ordinary amount of skill, judgment, and enthusiasm. The sketches are all ably written; the criticism impartial, and in general discriminating and just; and the notices of the early studies of the different ministers, so far as we are aware, correct. Though apparently by various hands, the sketches possess a unity of tone and a harmony of feeling, which evince the superintendence of one guiding mind. Abstracts of the sermons or lectures delivered by them, on the occasion when each was taken, are given in a style which, while it imparts a sufficient notion of the matter and characteristics of the discourse, is not too long or wearisome in the perusal."

FROM THE "ECLECTIC REVIEW."

"We took up this volume with some fear that it was another of this trashy kind, but we have been most agreeably disappointed. The writers—for it is the work of more than one author—have "souls above buttons," and while they do not omit the personal appearance of the subjects of their sketches, they keep it in its right place, and devote their attention to the mental peculiarities. In all there is an attempt—and usually a very successful one—at a fair discriminating estimate of character. The general plan of each sketch is to give a brief picture of the actual ministration of each clergyman selected, on a certain Sabbath-day, and then to furnish an estimate of the man, and a condensed biography. The former part of each sketch embraces, of course, minute details of the whole service, even down to the number of verses that were sung, and the number of minutes spent in prayer, as well as an abstract of the sermon; the latter part is usually done with care, candour, and acuteness."

FROM THE "SCOTTISH GUARDIAN."

"This is a clever, readable, popular kind of book, which we doubt not will have a considerable run. We let you to wit, then, ye gifted ministers, that 'there's a chiel amang ye takin' notes.' We don't think you have much cause of fear. The critic is very eulogistic. If the author shows talent in detecting and lauding clerical qualifications which persons of dimmer optics had not been able to discover, he shows greater talent when he has an unquestionably good subject. In these cases the sketches are graphic and accurate, and the criticisms just and good, and will, we are convinced, be read with pleasure."

• FROM THE "EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE."

"We are not strongly tending to the admiration of living biography; it is a delicate and difficult, not to say impossible, task to do it

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justice. Nevertheless we must say that this volume, chiefly relating to the living, has overcome some of our scruples. It is executed with unwonted tact and skill, and must, by impartial judges, be pronounced to be a very successful production of its kind. As we are well acquainted with some of the originals here sketched, we must pronounce them to be more than general likenesses. We think, too, that the spirit which pervades the volume is equally removed from fulsome adulation and unfair criticism, and that the friends of the men who here find a niche must regard the moral statuary as, upon the whole, remarkable for its truthfulness and adherence to nature. Such a volume is highly creditable to the pen from which it emanated, and can tend only to good upon the public mind."

FROM THE "CHURCH OF ENGLAND JOURNAL."

"These sketches are written with great ability and sound judgment; and we recommend them to the attention of all those, whether in England or any other part of the British dominions, who may be desirous of becoming acquainted with the personal history, and with the peculiar characteristics of pulpit oratory of the most eminent Scottish preachers."

FROM DR ALEXANDER IN "CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE."

"He has executed his task with very considerable skill and good taste. Many of his remarks are acute, and his criticisms are just and discriminating, and upon the whole the effect of the book may be good."

FROM THE "SCOTCH REFORMERS' GAZETTE."

"We cordially recommend this volume to Christians of all denominations in Scotland. The author has performed his task admirably. His sketches are to the life---every one, whether 'bond' or 'free,' receives fair play at his hands; and the most amiable feeling pervades the whole. Many of the sketches are given with distinguished ability; none of them are without interest. They lead

From nature up to nature's God.

And, on the whole, we should be glad to find that this volume be adopted as a favourite in every library in Scotland."

FROM THE "GREENOCK ADVERTISER."

"We have occasionally made extracts from the series of able sketches of eminent clergymen. These have always been distinguished by most excellent and kindly feeling, just appreciations of the styles and abilities of various preachers, and much skill and talent in pointing out their peculiar and distinguishing characteristics and beauties. They must always have been prepared with great labour, and are generally, we may say nearly always, accurate and distinct. They will, in their more embellished and appropriate shape, be popular; and we heartily commend it as a volume of much more than

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ordinary interest. We should add that throughout there is a most praiseworthy absence of all party and sectarian bias."

FROM THE "BRITISH BANNER."

"In our columns will be found an intimation respecting a new work, which has for its subject, 'The Person, Learning, Character, and Labours of the Chief of the Scottish Ministers.' To those, who, like ourselves, have enjoyed the luxury of reading them, we need not say anything of their excellence; but to those who have not, we would offer our assurance that they are incomparably the most masterly articles of the kind anywhere to be found. They are, in fact, lectures which might have emanated from the Academic Chair, on preachers and preaching, on pastors and pastorsehip--rich in great principles, in just canons, confirmed and illustrated by numerous and striking examples. They exhibit the application of sound criticism to the highest of all functions, in the spirit alike of the true gospel and of true philosophy. Nothing of the sort has appeared amongst us so calculated to correct, improve, and perfect pulpit instruction. We would reiterate the recommendation to apply early to prevent disappointment."

FROM THE "GLASGOW HERALD."

"Their principal merit is fidelity of portraiture; but, besides this, the style of writing is racy and pleasant, and a kindly spirit pervades the whole."

FROM THE "BRITISH QUARTERLY."

"To the truthfulness of some of these descriptions we can ourselves attest, and from these we draw our conclusions as to the remainder."

FROM THE "CHRISTIAN JOURNAL."

"Many of the ministers sketched in these volumes are our personal and intimate friends, and the portraiture in each case has evidently been a study—it could scarcely have been finished at one sitting. The talent they display is of a high order."

FROM "HOGG'S INSTRUCTOR."

"They are free, bold, graphic sketches, ranging from a state of analytical disposition and finish to that of simple outline. There is never any mistaking of the man that is before you, and often the view is most profound and striking."

FROM THE "ABERDEEN JOURNAL."

"In a literary point of view this publication is highly creditable. The criticism—theological, ethical, and oratorical—shows much acuteness and judicial discrimination."

WORKS ISSUED BY THE SAME PUBLISHER.

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